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ABSTRACT

This kit is intended to help family day care providers educate the general public about who providers are, what they do, and the importance of what they do. Among the materials in the kit are a marketing tip sheet that lists steps day care providers can take to market their program; steps they can take to improve the image of family day care in their community; and a number of resources. Also included is a guide called "Making News: A Family Day Care Provider's Guide to Working with the Media," which shows providers how to get news media interested in family day care, act in an interview, create a press release, give a news conference, write editorials, create public service announcements, and release photos. Other materials include the following informational articles or excerpts: (1) "Speaking Out: Early Childhood Advocacy"; (2) "Facts about Family Day Care"; (3) "Sharing the Good News about Family Day Care"; and (4) "Designing Family Day Care Environments" (which contains a list of necessary equipment for a family day care home); (5) "A Day in Family Day Care" (article describing a particular day care environment); and (6) a small booklet of captioned photographs called "Picturing Family Day Care." Two fact sheets explore myths and realities about family day care regulation and child care in general. (SAK)

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MARKETING KIT FOR FAMILY DAY CARE PROVIDERS

A PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN NATIONAL FAMILY DAY CARE PROJECT

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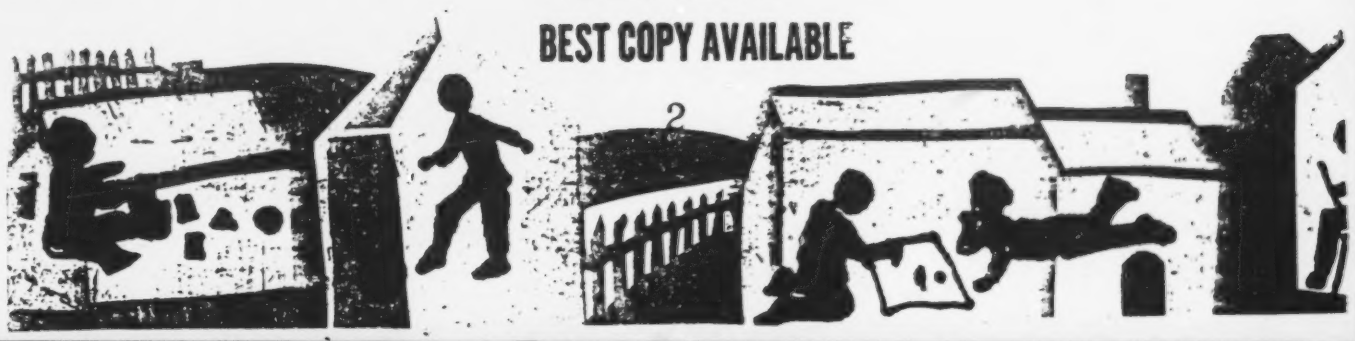

THIS MARKETING KIT CONTAINS:

- **"PICTURING FAMILY DAY CARE"** — a photo journal that shows what family day care is all about.
- **"SHARING THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT FAMILY DAY CARE"** — an article that describes real situations family day care providers experience and suggests ways to make the most of them.
- **"DESIGNING FAMILY DAY CARE ENVIRONMENTS"** — an article that describes how to create a high quality family day care environment.
- **"A DAY IN FAMILY DAY CARE"** — a reprint from the January 1990 issue of *Parents Magazine*.

AND ALSO:

- **A MARKETING TIP SHEET** that lists steps you can take to market your family day care program and improve the image of family day care in your community.
- **"MAKING NEWS: A FAMILY DAY CARE PROVIDER'S GUIDE TO WORKING WITH THE NEWS MEDIA"** — adapted from a National Association for the Education of Young Children publication, by Rebecca Leet.
- **"SPEAKING OUT"** — excerpts from *Speaking Out: Early Childhood Advocacy* by Stacie G. Goffin and Joan Lombardi.
- **THREE FACT SHEETS** that discuss the myths and realities of family day care — Facts About Family Day Care, Facts About Family Day Care Regulation, and Facts About Child Care.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN 53 WEST 23RD STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10010 212-645-4048 FAX: 212-645-7466

Joan Bronk
National President

Iris Gross, CAE
Executive Director

Dear Family Day Care Provider:

The National Family Day Care Project of the National Council of Jewish Women is pleased to share this marketing kit with you. We have designed it especially for providers, because we want you to have materials that relate specifically to you and the work that you do.

When we use the term marketing, we simply mean educating the public — communicating who you are, what you do, and why your work is important. Although the process may seem overwhelming at first, we hope this kit will help answer questions you may have about how to present yourself as a family day care provider, as well as how to speak out on behalf of the family day care field.

As you read through the materials, you will notice that we have chosen the term "family day care." You may be more familiar with "family child care" or "family day home." We hope you will feel free to substitute the term you prefer and the one that is used most in your community.

As an introduction to this marketing kit, ask yourself the questions on the next page. If the answer to any of them is "true," this kit may be of help to you.

Sincerely,

Lynn Lyss

Lynn Lyss, Chairwoman
National Family Day Care Project

Pat Ward

Pat Ward, Director
National Family Day Care Project

1. Sometimes when people ask me what I do, I don't know what to say. I'd like to have an easy way to show people what family day care is all about.

   ☐ **True** ☐ **False**

2. I'd like to have articles and photographs that describe family day care in positive ways to give to parents and others who want to know more about what I do.

   ☐ **True** ☐ **False**

3. I often have space available for additional children, but I don't know how to let people know.

   ☐ **True** ☐ **False**

4. I want to advertise my family day care program, but I don't have money to spend on expensive advertising or fancy brochures.

   ☐ **True** ☐ **False**

5. I'd like some guidance in choosing the best toys and equipment for my program — those that will be good for children and show parents that their children are learning while they play.

   ☐ **True** ☐ **False**

6. I'd like to know more about a number of aspects of family day care, but I don't know how to get more information.

   ☐ **True** ☐ **False**

7. As a family day care provider, I often feel isolated and wish I could talk with other people who understand the work I do.

   ☐ **True** ☐ **False**

8. I get very angry when I see negative and untrue stories about family day care, but I don't know what to do about it.

   ☐ **True** ☐ **False**

9. I'd like to interest our local reporters in writing about the positive aspects of family day care, but I don't know how to approach them.

   ☐ **True** ☐ **False**

10. I'd like to play a more active role in speaking up for family day care, but I don't know where to begin.

    ☐ **True** ☐ **False**

If your answer to any of these questions is true, you should find this marketing kit helpful.

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PICTURING FAMILY DAY CARE

A Marketing Kit for Family Day Care Providers produced by The National Council of Jewish Women, 53 West 23rd Street, New York, NY 10010 (212) 645-4048

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It's the beginning of another family day care day. Jimmy's mother can tell he's happy to be at Yolanda's house and see his friends again.

Photo: Ron Garrison © Zoological Society of San Diego 1991

Yolanda takes Jimmy to join the other children as they learn through play.

Photo: Ron Garrison © Zoological Society of San Diego 1991

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Dottie has taken care of three-year old Anna since she was a baby. "I remember when you were as little as he is. You used to drink every bit of your bottle, then give me a sweet smile, and fall right off to sleep."

Photo: Janet Brown McCracken. *Subjects & Predicates*

The soft sofas and carpeting beneath give Jane a perfect place to learn how to walk.

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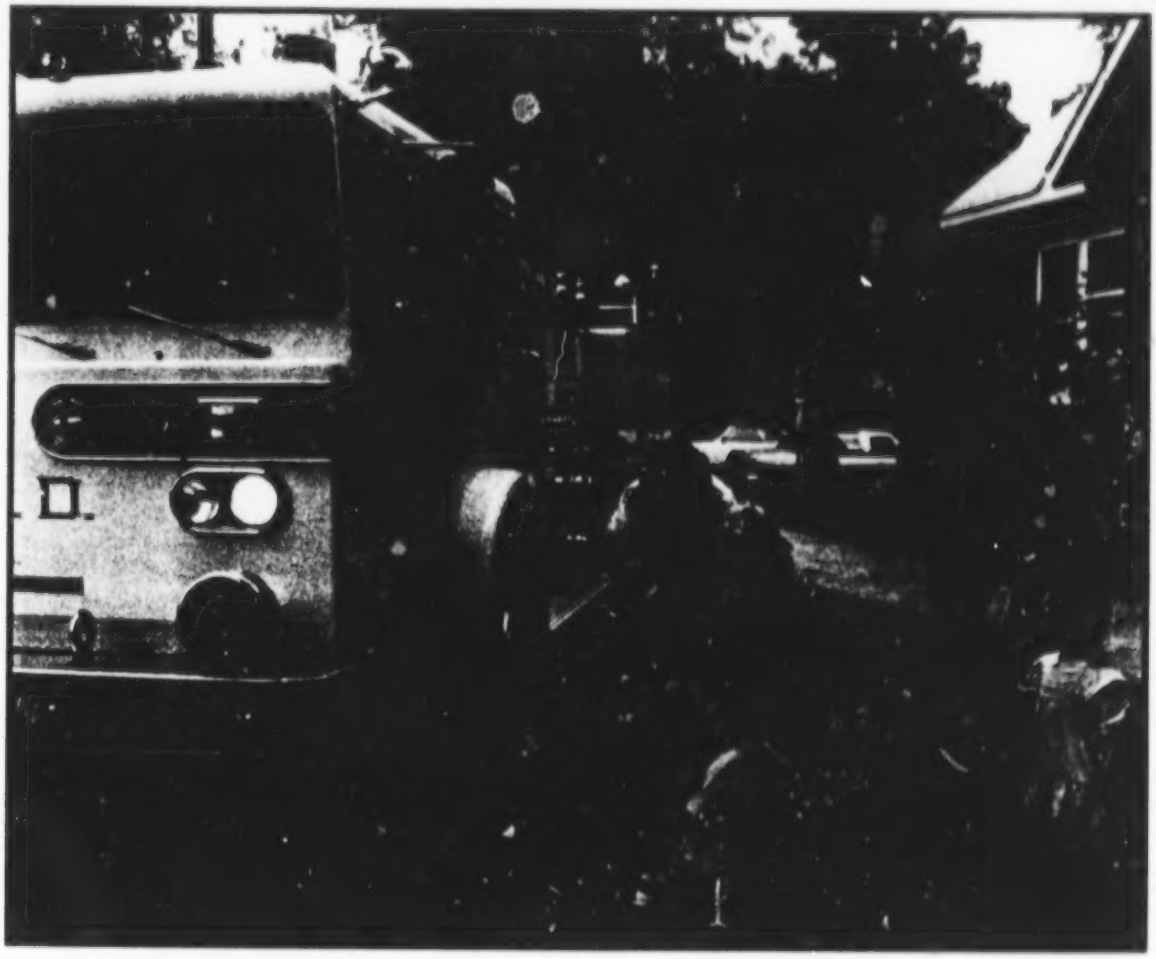
Photo: Nancy P. Alexander

It is Paul's mother's birthday. As the children prepare her birthday cake, they learn how to work together; counting, measuring, chopping, and mixing.

Photo: Janet Brown McCracken, *Subjects & Predicates*



Karen arranged for the local fire department to stop by her house. "Everyone will have a turn to try on the firefighter's suit. Look at the face shield on the helmet. What do you think it is for?"

Photo: Nancy P. Alexander

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Janet knows how to help children meet their own needs while respecting the needs of others. "It's Valerie's turn to paint at the easel now. Would you like to color with the markers or should we read a book while you wait for your turn?"

Photo: Meg Lovejoy

Lucille shows Henry how to wash his hands thoroughly so he will learn to take good care of himself.

Photo: Meg Lovejoy

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Some providers have large family day care homes. Abbey gathers the children together for a story, while her assistant cleans up from lunch.

Photo: Ron Garrison © Zoological Society of San Diego 1991

With all the mats laid down and shoes lined up, the children nap comfortably in the same space.

Photo: Ron Garrison © Zoological Society of San Diego 1991

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In the mixed-age groups of family day care, older children can practice their skills while learning how to nurture others.

Photo: Nancy P. Alexander

It's a special occasion when Brenda's husband, John, works the early shift. He can join the group for their afternoon outing!

Photo: Ron Garrison © Zoological Society of San Diego 1991

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After school, an older child joins the others in a quiet, cozy game. Marina has figured out how to use her small apartment to best advantage.

Photo: Meg Lovejoy

It's the close of a family day care day. Marina always chats with Joey's father for a few minutes at pick-up time. "Joey had a long nap and then made this finger painting. He had a *very* good day!"

Photo: Meg Lovejoy

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Lynn Lyss, Chairwoman Pat Ward, Director
Edited and Produced by:
Cynthia Massarsky, CWM Marketing Group, Tenafly, New Jersey
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JAMES RODERICK

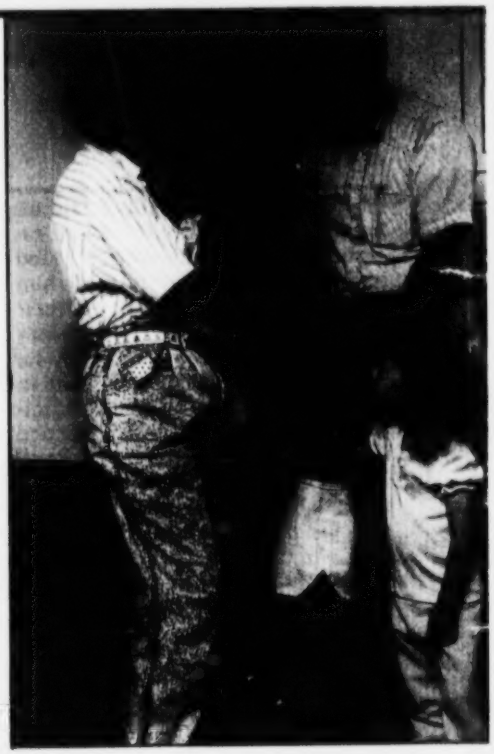
A Day In Family Day Care

By Phyllis La Farge

It's all in a day's work for Kathy Wilby, who extends her heart and home beyond immediate family boundaries.

One afternoon last winter Baby Dave, then nine months old, was busy clashing a pot lid against a pot on the floor of the kitchen while Kathy Wilby, his family day-care provider, helped three older children shape dough on a cookie sheet. A minute later Baby Dave (thus nicknamed to distinguish him from "Big Dave," two years old) abandoned the pot and lid and ventured out of the kitchen on his own.

He was a fast stomach creeper, propelling himself rapidly with his arms and a strong thrust of his right foot. Passing through the living room, he crept down a short hall into the family room, where the children spent much of the day. But soon he turned around and headed back for the kitchen, a worried look on his face. Where was Kathy? his expression seemed to say. When he reached the kitchen, she picked him up, held



Right: **Bill Trench and his daughter, Carolyn, are greeted by Kathy (holding her son David) as they arrive at the Wilby house.**

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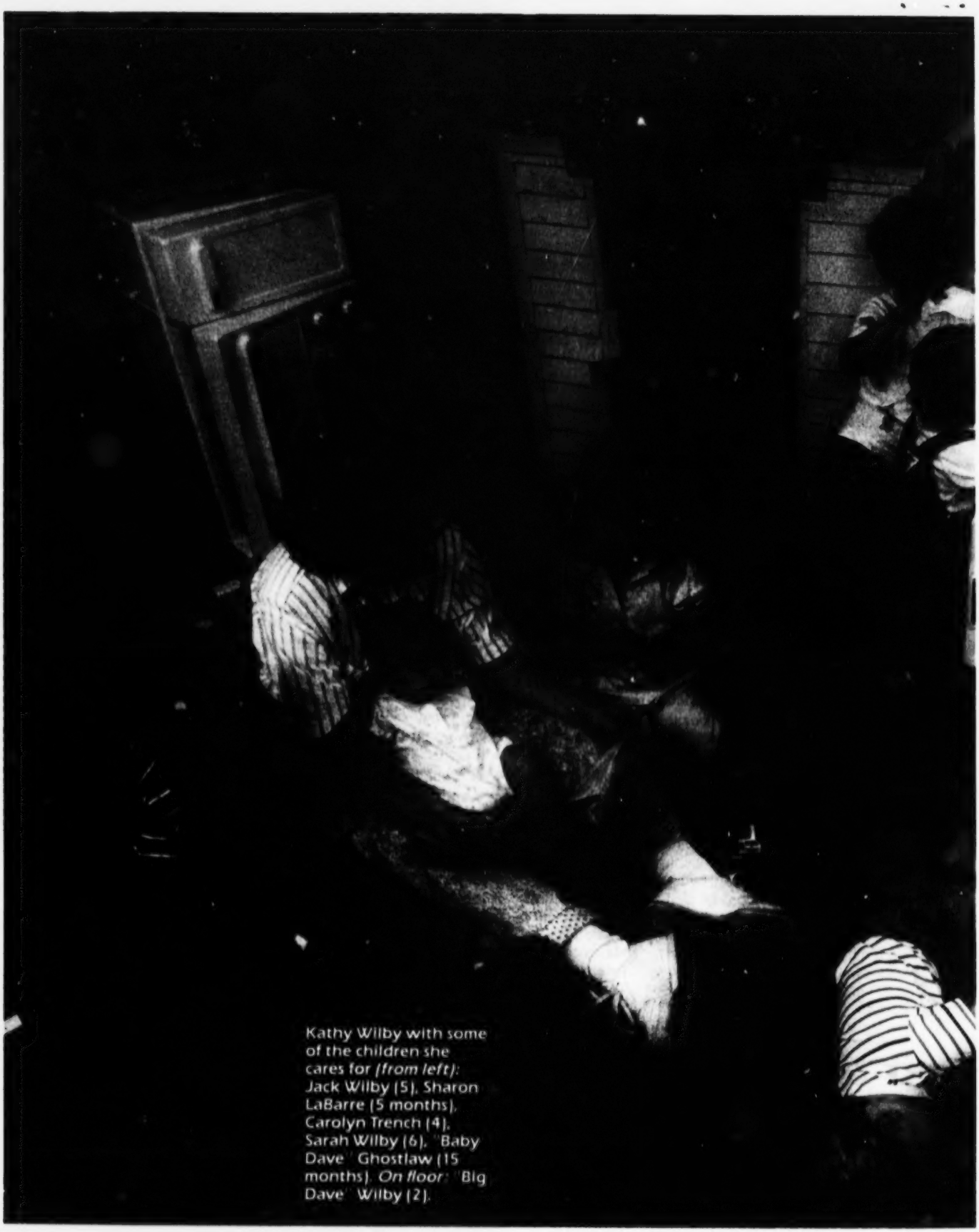

Kathy Wilby with some of the children she cares for *(from left)*: Jack Wilby (5), Sharon LaBarre (5 months), Carolyn Trench (4), Sarah Wilby (6), "Baby Dave" Ghostlaw (15 months). *On floor:* "Big Dave" Wilby (2).

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At Kathy's there are plenty of toys and supplies—as well as plenty of time for play and exploration.

Much of the day is spent in the family room, which, though not large, is safe, pleasant, and adequate for dancing.

him close, talked with him, and offered him his bottle. He drank eagerly, his face relaxed, and he molded his body to hers. Her response to him and his to her were evidence of their close relationship. In the six months Baby Dave had been with Kathy he had formed a strong attachment to her, the kind that young children need in order to have a secure foothold in the world. Prompt, flexible responsiveness, such as Kathy offered Baby Dave, is vital to the building of such an attachment.

Family is the model.

Today, as more very young children are cared for outside the home, child-development experts are asking what kind of setting best fosters attachment. Increasingly they point to family day care. "For infants and toddlers, family day care can't be beat when it's done well," says Claudia Shuster, a day-care expert with Connecticut's Capitol Region Education Council.

The reason for its success is implied by its name: Family life rather than school is the model for the majority of providers. A family model encourages flexibility and adaptability to a child's needs. In contrast, a school-like model requires the child to adapt to a set schedule; although it may be convenient, particularly in a day-care center where larger numbers of children are cared for, such a model is less responsive to very young children and therefore less geared to helping them build strong relationships. "Based on everything we know about the development of very young children, long-term relationships are central," says Rebecca Shahmoon Shanok, M.S.W., Ph.D., a therapist and board member of the National Center for Clinical Infant Programs. "In a family, parents find their way of adapting to the child's schedule," she adds. "Children under the age of two and a half are not ready to adapt to an arbitrary schedule."

Adapting to kids.

Kathy could be extremely flexible with respect to the children's needs for food and rest. On the day I visited Kathy prepared and served breakfast from 7:30 to 9:00 A.M. to her own three children—Big Dave, Jack, four, and Sarah, five—as well as to the four day-care children who arrived at different times. When Baby Dave didn't seem ready for his nap at 9:00 (he screamed when he was put in his crib), Kathy picked him up and brought him into the family room, where the other children were playing. He played happily for another 45

Facts About Family Day Care

Sandra Gellert, the president of the National Association for Family Day Care, summarizes some of the pluses and minuses of the family day-care experience for children and their parents.

The Pluses

- Providers accept infants at five to six weeks of age, whereas centers will generally not take them until they are at least three months of age.
- Providers usually have more flexible hours than centers have.
- The same caregiver cares for the child all day. (This is particularly important for infant attachment.)
- Because the child has only one caregiver, it is easier for the parent to keep informed about the development and behavior of the child.
- The same caregiver can care for the child from infancy until kindergarten, giving the child and the parent the benefits of stability and continuity.
- Family day care tends to be more flexible in the handling of mildly ill children. (Chicken pox had recently swept through the ranks of the children at Kathy's, but since everyone was exposed, Kathy said, "As long as they weren't miserably unhappy with it, I let them come.")
- Since overhead costs are low, family day care tends to be somewhat less expensive than center-based care. Infant care at a center ranges from $75 to $200 a week, whereas in a family day-care home the range is $50 to $150, depending on geographic location. (Kathy charges $110 a week for infants and $95 for toddlers.)

The Minuses

- Family day-care providers usually have less training in child development than center-based staff and have fewer opportunities for training.
- Lack of training means that providers may not offer as rich an environment for learning as most parents would like. This is not simply a matter of providing an adequate supply of toys and play equipment but of appreciating the importance of conversing with children, reading aloud, limiting television—and of finding in the ordinary activities of a home, ranging from cooking to sorting laundry, the best opportunities for children to explore and learn.
- Although the recommended ratio for family day care is one caregiver for two children under one year and one caregiver for three children under two years—and no more than four children under three years for one caregiver—some states still permit significantly higher ratios.
- The average yearly turnover rate of 59 percent of family day-care workers is a major problem. (The turnover rate in center-based care is not much better, however.) A high turnover rate denies children, particularly infants and toddlers, the stability and continuity of care they need.
- It is still hard to find quality family day care. Gellert notes that since it is less visible to the public than center-based care, it tends to be less accountable and not as well supervised.

—P. La F.

Kathy shares a few private moments with 5-month-old Sharon after she wakes up from an afternoon nap.

minutes, until Kathy carried him to the changing table. "Okay, kid," she said cheerfully, "I'm going to try again." She changed him in a leisurely fashion, taking time to chat with him. "Look what you can do," she said. "You can put your foot in your mouth." They smiled at each other. This time when she put him down, he was ready to sleep.

Later on, in the middle of lunch, three-and-a-half-year-old Carolyn Trench, who was recovering from chicken pox, said that she was tired and wanted her nap. She did not have to wait and fetched her special quilted blanket, settling down on Kathy's bed. After lunch the three other children—Kathy's two sons, Big Dave and Jack, as well as Todd Henkel, two and a half—had their naps. But Todd's nap was a very short one, at his parents' request: They had been having trouble getting him to settle down to sleep at night. Toward the end of the day Baby Dave took a second brief nap. There was never more than a half hour in the course of Kathy's ten-and-a-half-hour day—7:00 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.—when someone was not napping or eating.

Although Kathy structured the day carefully, the structure she provided was that of well-planned family life, not of preschool. The underlying theme of her care was attachment, building the same kind of bonds that families build. She forged these bonds not only with Baby Dave and Big Dave, the two youngest children, but with the older children as well.

According to Rory Darrah, a project coordinator for the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network, "There's a real trend toward keeping kids in family day care until kindergarten. Many parents are becoming more conscious of the fact that preschoolers continue to need nurturing in a familiar setting, and they understand that just because a child is four doesn't mean he needs to be in a program with ditto sheets."

It would be wrong to imply, how-

A Family Day-Care Checklist

Here are basic questions to ask when you interview prospective family day-care providers.

- Is the caregiver licensed or registered? Is the license or registration current? Is she accredited by the National Association for Family Day Care (NAFDC)? (So far only a small number of providers are, but NAFDC accreditation is the best guarantee of quality.) For further information, contact NAFDC, 815 15th Street N.W., Suite 928, Washington, D.C. 20005 202-347-3356.
- How many children are cared for in the home (including the caregiver's own)?
- Who else in the family will your child come in contact with each day? Be sure to meet them.
- How long has the provider been running the home? How long does she intend to continue? It's best if the provider has been in business at least a year and plans to continue for at least another year.
- Do the same children come most days, or are there different children every day or on alternate days?
- Does the caregiver have a written statement of her approach to child care and discipline? If not, ask her what her rules are for the children.
- Does the caregiver belong to a day-care association or network that offers support to its member providers?
- Does the caregiver have any training in child development or early-childhood education? What is her background?
- Is there a daily schedule? What kinds of things do the children do?
- If the program uses a preschool model, is it inappropriately academic? Do the children have enough time for play?
- Does the caregiver go out with the children—to do errands, for instance? If so, is there a car seat for your child, or should you provide one?
- If there are outings to parks and playgrounds, what is the ratio of children to adults on the trips?
- How many days has the caregiver been ill during the past year?
- Who cares for the children if the caregiver is ill or has an appointment?
- How are emergencies handled? (Emergency numbers should be posted near the phone.) Does the caregiver have an established plan of action in case of a fire in her house?
- Does the caregiver have any training in first aid?
- Does the caregiver provide a written contract that specifies the terms of your agreement?
- What is the caregiver's policy with respect to vacations—yours as well as hers?
- What will you have to supply? Food? Diapers?
- What does the caregiver serve for snacks and meals? Is she a member of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Child Care Food Program? (Providers who participate in this federal program tend to serve more nutritious meals.)
- Can the caregiver give you several references? Be sure to call them.
- Do you instinctively feel you can trust the provider? Does she seem relaxed and comfortable with the children and parents?
- Does the provider have an "open door" policy, by which parents are always welcome to visit and participate?—**P. La F.**

ever, that a "family model" precludes learning. The children Kathy cared for were learning a great deal—in the context of their own play, in their chance to explore their environment safely but independently, and in the day-to-day ups and downs of their interactions with Kathy and one another.

Learning naturally.

In the course of this day Kathy organized several projects as well: The children painted with watercolors, baked cookies, and made "volcanoes" with vinegar and baking soda.

After 8:45, when Kathy's daughter, Sarah, and Kristin Henkel (Todd's sister), age five, went off to school, six children were left: Big Dave, Baby Dave, Carolyn, Todd, Jack, and the Wilbys' cousin Paul Damon, four, who was visiting for the day. At Kathy's there was plenty of time for various forms of play and exploration, and plenty of toys and enough space to support the activities. The family room was not large but adequate, pleasant, and safe. (The house had a big fenced yard as well, where the children played in good weather; it was too cold to do so on this particular day.)

In the corner of the family room Carolyn and Todd, clearly devoted friends, played in an ample playhouse. As they pretended to cook with toy pots and pans and "went to school" on little tricycles they practiced cooperative skills and rehearsed what they were learning about families and the roles of men and women. "You knock down the table, and I'll be angry," Carolyn said to Todd at one point. "I'm the mommy: Knock down the table, and I'll be angry with you." A moment later she said, "I'm Heidi the mother. I'm a girl, so I can be the mom. I have long hair. That means I'm a girl."

Conversations that came about naturally were an important part of learning at Kathy's. At snack time she prepared "pirate ships"—boats made of apple slices with sails of cheese. The pirates were bits of carob. The ships inspired conversation as Kathy sat with the children while they ate. "Here's the baby pirate," said Paul, indicating a carob bit.

A moment later Paul put extra cheese pieces on his ship; they became cannons that shot carob cannonballs. But time was passing, and there were still a lot of uneaten pirates, sails, and ships. "Maybe you could pretend to be a giant and come along and eat your sail," Kathy suggested. "Fee, fi, fo, fum. Or maybe you could pretend to be a dinosaur coming to eat it."

However, life is not always such smooth sailing, and toward the end of the afternoon, while Kathy was taking a batch of cookies out of the oven, there was a scream from the family room. Kristin, sobbing, and Sarah, flushed and angry, came into the kitchen; both had returned from school a couple of hours earlier. They were trailed by the preschoolers, Jack, Paul, and Todd. (Carolyn was napping.)

"I'm willing to take time-out," said Sarah, revealing that she was the

Todd Henkel (3), "ironing," in a moment of solitary play.

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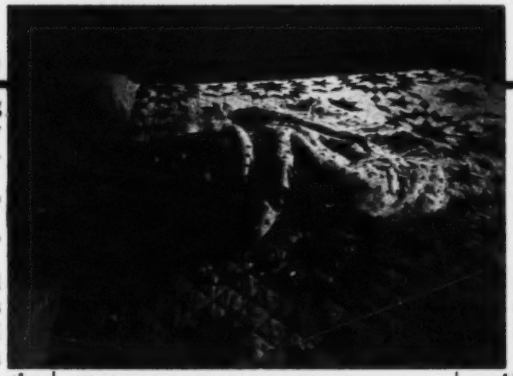
cause of the scream and using the catchword for a disciplinary technique Kathy, like many parents, uses.

"What do you mean, willing?" her mother said, then asked, "What happened?'

"I bit her," Sarah said, still flushed. "Just because she finds something, it doesn't mean I have to share." (A music box, a special treasure of Sarah's, was the bone of contention.)



Following her own sleep needs, Carolyn Trench (4) takes a nap on Kathy's bed.

A time for healing.

Comforting Kristin, Kathy looked at her arm, which bore a faint mark. "What do you do in a situation like that? You come and see me," she told Sarah firmly. Misdeeds and the meting out of justice are fascinating at any age, and for a moment all the children crowded into the kitchen. Kathy told them to go play while Sarah sat quietly on a chair in the kitchen. Gradually the girl's composure returned; her flush died down. When Sarah's time-out was over, Kathy called the children to come taste the cookies. It was a moment for healing.

First Jack lightened the impact of adult authority. "You know what I think time-out is?" he asked. "I think it's lying on the couch and snoring."

But it was also a moment for forgiveness: "I think we should change our time-outs to that," Kristin agreed with Jack.

"I'm glad I took that time-out," Sarah said and then added a few seconds later, as she ate her cookie, "This one really has a lot of chips."

It was not at all easy for the Wilby children to have the day-care children spend long hours in their home—nor was it easy for the youngsters to spend hours outside their home. But Kathy had helped all the children forge the kind of bonds—familial bonds—that enabled them to weather a crisis; in weathering it, they had an opportunity for a kind of learning that goes far beyond anything on a ditto sheet.

After they finished the cookies, the children were back in the family room, playing a game of "nap time," with everyone stretched out on the couch, chairs, and floor. Kristin was the mother. Paul began shooting with the attack vehicle that had been around all day. "You're trying to kill people," said Kristin. "That's not nice. Don't shoot people who have daughters."

"Okay, madam," said Paul, "but if you do anything more, I'll call a cop."

Kristin searched for a stronger argument. "It's against the law to shoot the president, and I'm the president."

Sarah, who was lying on the couch, wrapped in a blanket, said, "It's against the law to kill anyone."

Their play reflected in their own terms what they were learning about "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not," but it's doubtful that they would have been able to play as amicably if Kathy had not tempered the moral order she expected with responsiveness to individuals.

Talking things over.

At the very end of the day she sat down with all the children in the family room. Sarah was beside her on the couch. It would be better, Kathy said, if Sarah kept her really precious treasures in her room. Changing the topic slightly, but getting at the core of the issue between herself and Kristin, Sarah said, "I want to play a game by what I think, not what she says." Kathy pointed out that the fact that both Sarah and Kristin were the oldest girls might have had something to do with their problem. "I'm the oldest in this room," said Sarah. "But Kristin is the oldest in her family," Kathy offered. The concept was not simple for a six-year-old, but I admired Kathy for creating an opportunity, even with seven other children in the room, to give Sarah the undivided attention she needed.

When Kathy and Sarah had finished their talk, Kathy picked up a book and started to read to Sarah, Kristin, Big Dave, and Paul. (Carolyn and Todd were in the playhouse. Jack was in the bathroom. Baby Dave was gumming a toy at their feet.)

She was still reading when at 4:40 William Trench, Carolyn's father, arrived to pick up his daughter. (Todd gave Carolyn a big kiss before she left.) At 4:50 Diana Henkel arrived for Todd and Kristin. At 5:30 Donald Ghostlaw came for Baby Dave. A family day-care day was done.

The new professionals.

Kathy is an example of the new professional in the field of family day care. "Kathy's not in any way just a homemaker who takes care of other people's children" was the way Donald Ghostlaw put it. She not only has a degree in early-childhood education but is closely involved with her local day-care association, serving as copresident. Kathy herself said that she found it important "to come across as a professional and thus be treated as one." For Kathy, professionalism includes being very clear about her fees, taking tax deductions permitted to someone conducting business in her home, keeping up-to-date on the paperwork required of her as a provider licensed by the state of Connecticut and as a participant in the federal Child Care Food Program, offering parents a written statement of her approach to child care, planning a yearly two-week vacation for herself—she gives clients 30 days' notice—and offering clients two weeks' vacation, during which they are not obligated to pay her.

The increasing professionalization of family day care—virtually nonexistent ten years ago—benefits children and parents. Not only does it help a provider find ongoing training and support, but it inclines her to see family day care as a career choice, which in itself promises greater stability and continuity for children. Kathy could not say that she would be a provider "forever," but she was quite sure she would be in business for four more years at least—a very important consideration for the families she serves. ◉

Phyllis La Farge's "First Days in First Grade" appeared in the September, 1989, issue. She is a contributing editor of *Parents Magazine*.

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SHARING THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT FAMILY DAY CARE

Imagine this scenario. Your local newspaper decides to feature an outstanding child care provider of the 90's. After interviewing numerous candidates, the paper selects Maria who runs a local family day care home. It prints the following description:

"Maria runs a program that offers a wealth of play and learning opportunities while allowing kids to feel like they're at home. Parents are drawn to her program by the individualized attention, nurturing, homey atmosphere, and Maria's approach to teaching young children, which recognizes the infinite potential for fun and education in activities that take place around the home.

The day we visited Maria, the children were bubbling over with excitement about their outing to the zoo the day before. But it was really the routine activities that impressed us most—Maria reading a story to a child before his nap, helping another learn to tie her shoes, and working on potty training with a third. When two older children arrived after school, she greeted them with energy and enthusiasm—and a fresh batch of cookies the younger ones helped bake.

While Maria's family day care home has a loving, family feeling, parents know she is more than just "the nice lady next door." She displays credentials from a child care safety course and has state licensing documents and Food Program certification. Other signs that Maria's family day care home is organized and reliable include written policies on fees, hours, holidays and vacations, as well as provisions for back-up in case of illness or emergency."

Although "Maria" is a fictional character, she does represent a growing trend in family day care. The number of quality providers in the field is increasing steadily, with many more receiving child care training and complying with state regulatory and licensing procedures. And more public resources are being devoted to family day care, fostering the emergence of family day care associations and resource and referral child care agencies to help providers develop quality programs.

Unfortunately, too few people know the good news about family day care. Although it is one of the most widely used forms of child care in this country, many people—including parents of young children—have never even heard of it. When seeking "reliable" and "educational" child care, many think only of day care centers. To some the name family day care evokes images of kids hanging around a house with nothing to do, or of negative stories in the news. Even parents familiar with family day care and its good qualities sometimes express concern over whether it provides adequate stimulation for older children.

In order to transform family day care's image, providers must publicize their skills, pride and sense of professionalism.

The message that needs to be spread is that quality family day care is good for children. Providers must let the public know that a good family day care home can offer the enrichment a young child needs in a warm, homey setting. Many people simply don't know that learning can take place in a family day care provider's kitchen, den or backyard. Explaining this to others is a first step toward generating public awareness that family day care can be a high quality, high value form of child care.

GIVING FAMILY DAY CARE A POSITIVE IMAGE

Creating a positive image for family day can begin with how providers present themselves to others. How do people respond when they hear you're a family day care provider? One group of providers recalls reactions like, "Oh, you're a housewife," or "How nice that you don't have to work!" The words they hear parents and other child care workers use about family day care include "babysitter," "untrained," and "cheap." In contrast,

providers have a very different self image. They describe their work with words like "nurturer," "professsional," "employed mother," and "businesswoman."

There is no question that family day care's public image needs to be recast in this positive light. How can this be accomplished? It's a formidable task that requires the efforts of providers, parents and organizations supporting family day care, as well as media attention. In order to transform family day care's image, providers must publicize their skills, pride and sense of professionalism.

The stories that follow illustrate some of the positive aspects of family day care, and demonstrate how providers can highlight them to parents, child care professionals and interested outsiders, including the media. While providers may consider these examples a normal part of their work, few have succeeded in "marketing" their attributes and achievements. Each story includes tips on how to make the most of what you do.

A HIGH QUALITY, EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

THE STORY:

At Alice's day care home, the day begins with a hearty breakfast, served between 7:00 and 8:30 a.m. Shortly after 9 o'clock, Alice takes the children outside to play and learn in the backyard, complete with a garden, swings and bird feeders. Late morning is naptime for some, reading and drawing time for others. After lunch and naps, it's time for organized group activities including watercolor painting, cookie baking, dress-up and puppet shows, or an outing to the nearby playground. Late afternoon before parents arrive is wind-down time, with snacks, reading, and games.

THE SIGNIFICANCE:

Alice's program blends vigorous and quiet activities, structure and informality, learning through play, and nurturing. The day is planned and there is a routine, but it isn't rigid. Children nap when they need to and make choices about activities. Learning is incorporated into everything, from reading stories to making lunch to art. The children learn from Alice and also from one another. The younger children learn from the older ones and the older ones benefit from interacting with children of mixed ages, including Alice's teenage children.

While Alice charges a little more than other family day care homes in her area—she calls her fee "tuition"—parents are happy to pay it. Why? Because Alice runs an excellent planned program, and she limits enrollment to five or six children. She has taken child care courses that helped her develop a wide range of age-appropriate activities. Alice welcomes parents to stop by and observe.

MARKETING A GOOD PROGRAM:

Alice doesn't trust to luck that parents will recognize that her program is high quality. How does she let them know it? Communication is the key. When she meets new parents, she shows them a handbook containing certificates from training courses she's attended, newsletters she has sent parents, newspaper clippings about her program, and photos of interesting activities, special occasions and outings with the children.

Alice keeps the parents of children in the program informed about her own professional development and about their children's activities and progress. In addition to posting a daily activities log she schedules periodic meetings with parents to discuss how their children are doing. She also plans healthy menus and gives copies to parents.

GIVING INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION

THE STORY:

Joseph, one of the babies in Marcy's family day care home, seemed to be developing at an unusually slow rate. Marcy made a point of observing his responses and mentioned her concerns to the parents. Acting on Marcy's advice, his parents took him to the pediatrician. They discovered a hearing problem that had gone unnoticed at an earlier check-up, and the child was referred to a specialist.

THE SIGNIFICANCE:

With a limited number of children in her care, Marcy is able pay close attention to each one. This one-on-one interaction enables her to notice patterns like the one that indicated Joseph's problem. For Joseph's parents, and the parents of other children in her group, Marcy's discovery symbolized the close involvement and individual attention that is one of the outstanding features of her family day care home. Marcy is able to accomodate each child's needs while still caring for the group, paying special attention to one who is unhappy, insecure, or not feeling well.

Marcy keeps an open line of communication with parents and shares her insights about all sorts of things, not just urgent problems. She also listens to parents carefully, and responds to their individual concerns and desires. She makes sure to communicate with all parents regularly about their children's progress and any specific accomplishments and problems that arise.

MARKETING INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION:

One of the qualities that attracts many parents to family day care is the high level of individual attention providers can offer the children. Marcy lets parents know about this by encouraging them to observe family day care activities where they are able to see how each child participates and is nurtured by the provider. She also shares stories with parents about circumstances, whether routine or unusual, when children have received special individual attention.

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

THE STORY:

When three-year-old Jessica's father

had to go into the hospital, Lucille, her family day care provider, became the central figure in an extended family-like network that rallied to support Jessica's family. Besides Lucille, the "extended family" included the parents of the other children, who pitched in to help out. Some did grocery shopping for Jessica's mother, others invited Jessica over to play to keep her busy and give her mother a break. Lucille served as a clearing-house for phone calls and arrangements, and helped organize activities.

THE SIGNIFICANCE:

The support system that evolved to help out Jessica's family demonstrates family day care's potential to become more than just child care. When families face a crisis, a family day care home can become like an extended family. It wasn't just a happy coincidence that the other parents at Lucille's family day care were caring individuals– she interviews all families before accepting their children to make sure their values and philosophies on child care are compatible.

MARKETING THE "PARENTS AS PARTNERS" CONCEPT:

Lucille lets parents know from the outset that she is a deeply caring and involved provider. During interviews, she describes the many special relationships she has formed with parents and children over the years, and the way she nurtures children and supports their families. She also describes the bonds her own, older children have formed with children in her care. She offers references of parents whose children are in her care and some who have "graduated" from child care.

At the same time, Lucille is forthright about what she expects of parents in return. She insists that they respect her rules and treat her as a professional. Although Lucille gladly helps parents out in emergencies—for example allowing a child to stay late when something comes up, or taking in a sick but not contagious child—she doesn't accept chronic lateness or falling behind in payments. Policies and procedures are typed up and handed out, and Lucille gives parents a formal contract to sign upon enrollment.

THE SOFT, HOMEY ENVIRONMENT

THE STORY:

Sarabeth's family day care home isn't large and she doesn't have a big budget for decoration or equipment. Nevertheless, she has created a safe, cheerful and welcoming environment that helps parents feel good about leaving their children there each day. Children are reassured to see things that remind them of their own homes– a cozy kitchen where they eat their meals, a bedroom where they nap, and indoor and outdoor spaces clearly set up for play. Parents are comfortable knowing the entire house is baby-proofed, with electrical outlets covered, dangerous objects out of reach, cabinets secured and stairwells closed off. And everyone likes the lively, familial atmosphere, which includes older siblings and Sarabeth's own older children after school.

Sarabeth's family room, the primary indoor play area, is a cheerful room with plenty of light, hanging plants, a fish tank, and an old piano the children like to play. The floor is carpeted and there is no furniture with sharp edges. In addition to a big, comfortable sofa, there is a child-sized table and chairs where children draw and play with toys, and lots of large, colorful pillows tossed around the floor. One wall is decorated with the children's artwork, another is filled with children's books and toys. The backyard has swings and play equipment, as well as a tree house the older children helped build.

THE SIGNIFICANCE:

Many parents prefer the homey feeling of family day care for infants and younger children, and for older children who've been in school all day. Sarabeth's family day care has the familiar feel, sounds and smells of home that help make children feel secure. They can curl up on a couch or chair with a book when they want to, sit around the kitchen table for snacks after school, and play in a backyard - in other words, make themselves at home.

MARKETING THE SOFT, HOMEY ENVIRONMENT:

When she gives parents a tour of her home, Sarabeth emphasizes safety first, letting them know that she has passed a safety inspection as part of the state licensing procedure. To help parents recognize the soft and warm qualities of her family day care home, she encourages them to observe when children are there, not when the house is empty. She feels that is the best way for them to see how her home's environment is conducive to creative play, learning, fun, and rest. She points out the impromptu activities that happen around her house as well, like her 10-year-old daughter giving a three-year-old a piano lesson, her teenage son playing catch with a little boy after school, and some older siblings holding a dance contest with the younger children.

When parents of older children express concern over whether they will learn and be stimulated in her home, she encourages them to compare the activities they see in her home with those in child care centers or other types of programs. In her years of experience, Sarabeth has developed confidence that she can provide a full range of enriching activities for children of varying ages within her home.

GETTING GOOD PRESS

THE STORY:

Miranda, a family day care provider, realized her profession had a serious image problem when, one day, her nine-year-old son Trevor came home from school in tears. He had raised his hand when his teacher asked for volunteers to invite parents to participate in a "career day." When he told her his mother was a family day care provider and that she had recently won an award from the local family day care association, the teacher responded, "No, we're looking for people

with real careers."

Although she had no experience dealing with the press, Miranda embarked on a campaign to improve the image of providers and of family day care itself. She knew she needed an "angle" to interest reporters in doing a story. She also knew that infant care was in great demand and short supply in her community, and that two local television anchorwomen were pregnant, so she took a chance and invited them to visit her family day care home. Although both were interested, they turned her down because they were too busy.

Miranda was disappointed, but not discouraged. She realized she was on the right track and began planning an event for the "Week of the Young Child" that would attract media attention. She and other providers decided to hold a big picnic in a local park for children and their families. A huge success, the event attracted television and newspaper coverage.

Once she'd gotten the ball rolling, Miranda found other opportunities to interest the press in positive stories involving family day care. She helped organize a tour of quality family day care homes for the local news media, and submitted an editorial about misconceptions about family day care. Miranda soon became a voice for family day care providers in her community and a resource for reporters seeking information about child care. Encouraged by the increase in positive coverage, other providers and organizations supporting them became more actively involved in working to heighten public awareness of their work.

THE SIGNIFICANCE:

Miranda discovered that her frustration over the lack of recognition of her profession could be channeled into a campaign to build a positive image for family day care. She quickly learned that getting a message across in the media requires a well-planned strategy, determination, and perseverance. She also found that there was a niche—and a need—for informed caregivers to speak out and help represent the many invisible family day care providers in her community.

MARKETING THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT FAMILY DAY CARE:

Getting the press to cover good news is no small feat. With the help of her local family day care association, Miranda develops strategies for approaching the media and writes up news releases and tip sheets. Once she succeeds in interesting the media in a story, she always makes sure she's well prepared and has lots of information to help reporters better understand family day care.

Before interviews, she prepares notes on positive stories about achievements and good experiences. For instance, she relates how she took two of her children to the zoo for the first time; or how another child whose parents spoke Spanish at home learned his first English words at her home.

Miranda also shares stories that illustrate the flexibility and commitment required to run a family day care home. She explains that she opens her home at 6:30 a.m. to accomodate nurses at the local hospital, and even keeps a child overnight when a single parent has to be out of town.

RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS

While getting good press is critical to raising public awareness about family day care, you can play a key role in conveying a strong, positive image of what providers do. There are some simple steps that you can take. Help parents, other child care professionals and members of the community understand the valuable—and essential—role family day care providers play. More than 2.5 million children are in family day care homes in this country, according to the most recent government statistics. With mothers of infants and young children continuing to join the work force in growing numbers, the number of children in family day care will also keep growing.

To raise public awareness, let others know that family day care exists in your community, then help people understand that it is a positive child care option. These messages can be communicated in day-to-day interactions, where you describe your work in positive terms to friends, neighbors, members of their church, synagogue or PTA—and in more public forums, such as open houses, local functions, and letters to the editor or articles for the local newspaper. Slowly, others will begin to understand that family day care is quality child care, and that children can learn and be stimulated while being loved and nurtured in a warm, secure home environment.

The National Family Day Care Project (NFDCP), a four-year project run by volunteers of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) in 21 states, has set improving family day care's image as one of its objectives. In its effort to understand what the public thinks about family day care, the NFDCP has held focus groups with parents, providers and other child care professionals, ranging from representatives of family day care associations and resource and referral agencies to regulatory agency staff. National child care experts and marketing experts have also been consulted. The consensus of the varied participants is that providers, child care professionals and parents each can play an important role in working to improve family day care's image.

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DESIGNING FAMILY DAY CARE ENVIRONMENTS

BY JIM GREENMAN

The guide was adapted from an article in the November/December 1990 issue of *Child Care Information Exchange.*

The highest quality child care—home or center—offers personalized, individualized care and learning in a warm, secure, experience-rich environment. The program fits the child, not the other way around. The adult focus is more on learning and facilitation than on teaching and direction. Adults listen to children and carry on individual conversations with them about real issues of concern to the children. Parents are respected, not just as partners, but as senior partners when it comes to the care of their child. Services are flexible, accommodating within defined limits the needs of the child and family. There is a warm and respectful relationship between family and program that extends over time.

PLACES FOR CHILDHOOD

Good child care places are not places where childhood is experienced under florescent lights, always surrounded by children the same age. They rarely involve institutional living where the individual must fit the institution, standard operating procedures prevail, and most of the adult-child interactions are child management. Homes can have significant advantages over center-based care in providing a "place for a childhood" and a good early education.

SCALE: Homes are human sized institutions. Serving a small number of children and families gives a family day care home a head start in achieving personal relationships and flexible routines and services.

Where are the 3-R's in family day care? Everywhere! Young children are learning what they need to learn through serious hands-on investigation.

THE HOME ITSELF: Young children need experience and support, not instruction, and they need care over the long day. Homes are designed and equipped for living: eating, sleeping, caring, resting, being together, and being apart, which makes them natural learning environments. Children learn what the world is made up of and how it works when they are engaged in the real life of the home - the cooking, cleaning, and shopping. Homes are laboratories for active learning when we encourage exploration of the life within: the sunlight, breezes and frost on the window; the shadows descending on a corner of the room; the sifting, kneading, and mixing in the kitchen; setting the tables; feeding the cat under the ledge and the birds outside the window.

Where are the 3-R's in family day care? Everywhere! Young children are learning what they need to learn through serious hands-on investigation. The importance of reading and writing is reinforced by the emphasis on written and spoken language and symbol recognition. Children learn mathematical concepts and skills through pouring, classifying, sorting, measuring and number activities—working out the concepts of more and less, one to one correspondence, and addition and subtraction. Much of this can happen naturally when children are involved with shopping, cooking, laundry, and putting things back into labeled storage containers.

A good home naturally has environmental variety, or "different places to be." It is important to have places of different size and shape, with different feels and sounds, and different lighting and colors over the long day. Remember

your favorite childhood places: under the piano or the tree out back, behind the couch, on the slippery chair, in the stairwell, or on the stairs.

Homes easily provide a "place to pause" when the world moves too fast, or a child has to get her or his dignity back together. They also supply places to concentrate and focus on books, puzzles, and the work of early education. Homes have places to fill up or empty out, and to work through other important spatial concepts of in and out, over and under, and mathematical concepts of volume, distance, and shape.

The more formal and crowded conditions of a center often result in fewer "places to be," much less spatial variety, and few places to concentrate.

THE MULTI-AGE GROUP: Children learn from each other, probably more than they do from adults. They learn from playing, helping, and watching each other navigate life's waters. In a multi-age group, children are also more likely to be accepted as individuals, rather than as just "one of the preschoolers."

THE DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE HOME

A family day care home is developmentally appropriate if:

- care is individual, personal and responsive.
- learning is individual and child choice is valued.
- learning experiences are active, concrete, and relevant to the child.
- all developmental areas are addressed in the learning environment.
- a wide variety of experience is available to accommodate wide ranges in interests and development.
- providers respectfully facilitate, guide, encourage, and nurture each child's self-esteem, competence, and self reliance.
- the child's great need for movement, expression, noisemaking and exuberance is planned for.

A typical developmentally inappropriate home is likely to require children to be too passive and group oriented, allow for little individuality, and focus more on waiting, instruction, and child listening than on learning and child doing. There may be too much T.V. or instruction, waiting while older or younger children's needs are attended to, or housekeeping. Children may be restricted to only a small part of the home. Either a long unstructured day or a too structured day puts the burden of adjustment on the child.

CHILDREN'S LEARNING

What does a child have to learn? *Who am I? What can I be? What is the world made of? How does it work? What am I made of? What can I do? How do I fit in with all these others?* It is the spirit, not the content of education that is important. Children need active experience with the world of people and things more than they need information.

Children don't learn in a predictable, linear fashion. Young children don't fit their needs for care into convenient slots. They swallow experience in sips and gulps as well as in measured doses. Their investigations often do not fit into tidy spaces and neat time slots. Movement is as necessary to learning as are air and light. Children's sounds and silences punctuate discoveries. They are generous and selfish and social and solitary at will.

Young children are active, messy scientists exploring with their senses and bodies. A child seeking a good learning environment might ask (if he or she could): *Can I be messy? Can I be noisy? Can I be alone? Can I get some quiet? Can I move? Can I be still? Can I spread out over space and time? Where's the stuff, the loose parts, the raw material of discovery?*

CHILDREN NEED ADULTS WHO ARE:	CHILDREN NEED ADULTS WHO AREN'T:
Enthusiasts about learning	Tired
Listeners	Preoccupied
Mentors	Egocentric
(who ask the right questions)	(focused on teaching, not learning)
Nurturers	"hard of listening"

A developmentally appropriate learning environment is designed for individual children to be messy, noisy and quiet, alone and social, and active and quiet. It is designed to accommodate much stuff: loose parts, the raw material of discovery by active hands and minds. Therefore, it is designed for individual, independent learning and easy set up and "take down" so that the provider can really focus on the children.

THE CHALLENGE OF FAMILY DAY CARE

BALANCING YOUR FAMILY AND THE DAY CARE HOME

The value of family day care lies in making full use of the family home, not confining children to one room. That may, however, not result in the best place to live and may put a strain on family life.

In most family day care homes, the solution to this problem lies in good planning and purchasing that allow for a daily transformation of the home. Key elements of this planning include:

STORAGE

Plan for quantity and convenience. Every step saved and every minute not spent looking for something translates into time and energy for children. Store play materials, cleaning supplies and equipment close to the point of use. Be creative; use baskets, stuff sacks, underbed boxes, undercushion storage, closet organizers, tubes, and trunks.

TRANSFORMABLE LEARNING CENTERS

Define an area by its surface and teach

children the limits of activity on that surface: a rug, carpet square, tray, tablecloth, tarp over the furniture, or chalkboard on the floor. For example, a tarp on the couch makes it a jumping platform; a green felt tablecloth turns the table into a village green for play people.

PORTABLE LEARNING CENTERS

In a box, backpack, suitcase, or tub, pack a surface and play/work material and develop a drawing suitcase, a camping prop box, or a nature investigation back pack.

FLEXIBLE FURNISHINGS

Trunks can be tables as well as storage. Shades can be display areas for art. TV trays, car seats with trays, and wading pools can all have multiple uses.

The right equipment and furnishings support a developmentally appropriate setting for care and learning. The goal is to maximize both child and adult competence. With furnishings and equipment that support appropriate, independent child use and easy adult use, children will have more experiences that help them reach developmental goals and caregivers will have more time to care for children and to support their learning. A well equipped, developmentally appropriate family day care home provides the following:

- **Soft, Comfortable Furniture:** couches, easy chairs, futons, pillows.
- **Child Accessible Open Storage:** shelves, bins, cubbies, carts, bags.
- **A variety of play materials:** Sufficient variety to rotate play material.
- **Sufficient quantity of play materials:** More of the same items such as lego or blocks are usually preferable to a smaller number of similar items. These items require large quantities per child for their potential value to be realized.
- **Duplicates:** Duplicates of popular items are important to facilitate smooth social relationships, particularly for toddlers and young preschoolers.
- **Learning Materials Offering a Balance of:**
  - Open/closed: Open materials such as blocks, clay, and painting materials have no correct outcome. Closed materials such as puzzles, Montessori materials, or worksheets involve a right answer or a clear ending.
  - Plastic/wood/metal: An imbalance of brightly colored plastic is a common problem that creates an overstimulating aesthetic.
  - Commercial toys/stuff: "Stuff" is everything not designed to be toys that children play with - pots, pans, cardboard, twigs, tools, and other "junk".
  - Novelty and challenge/familiarity: Opportunities for practice and mastery, as well as for novelty and challenge.
  - Active/quiet play materials: Trucks and balls and boisterous dramatic play items as well as books, stuffed animals, dolls and manipulatives.
  - Individual/social play materials: Some equipment requires that children use it together, other materials allow for solitary use.
  - Simple/complex materials: A simple item such as a rattle or car has one obvious use. A complex item like a play bus with people has subparts, or multiple uses that allow children to improvise.

PREVAILING PRACTICE & PARENT/PROVIDER OPINIONS

Many decisions about equipping caring and learning environments are a matter of taste and opinion. Sometimes there are few developmental implications, or parents or professionals do not agree on the issues. In those cases, making decisions as to the need for cribs or cots, the use of infant jumpers, what wheel toys are appropriate and so on, can be facilitated by knowing both the prevailing practice in the community and parent perceptions as to purchasing equipment.

CRITERIA FOR EQUIPMENT SELECTION

- **Durability:** How long will it hold up? Family day care home use is harder than home use.
- **Safety:** Does it have sharp edges or corners? Parts to swallow? Toxic surface? Will it be pulled or tipped over? How will it wear or break?
- **Health:** Does it allow for easy cleaning and disinfecting?
- **Size/scale:** Is it the right size and scale for projected and unanticipated use by children or adults?
- **Quality of play experience:**
  - Variety of use: Can it be used by different children (age, size), for different activities?
  - Interest: How long will it hold a child's interest?
  - Challenge: How long will it challenge a child?
  - Developmental/educational value: What developmental needs or educational skill does the use of the equipment engender?
- **Quality of caring experience:**
  - Is it consistent with the child/parent experience?
  - Does it help the provider's task?
  - Does it add to the child/parent's sense of security?
- **Accessibility/independent use:** Does the equipment require adult assistance in display, preparation, or use?
- **Aesthetics:** Is the design attractive? Does the color, size, and shape add or detract from the overall aesthetic of the home (e.g. will there be too much primary colored, plastic equipment)?
- **Appeal to a variety of the senses:** A mobile with sound appeals to sight and hearing.
- **Authenticity:** Real items used for real activities - garden tools, workbenches, kitchen and cleaning utensils.
- **Cost/value:** The value of an item depends on the significance and length of its use relative to the price. □

GUIDE TO EQUIPPING YOUR PROGRAM

This is a guide, not a prescription, of the many things that might be in a high quality home. No good home will have all of these, and some will have many wonderful things not on the list.

	INFANT 6 WEEKS TO 1 YEAR	TODDLER 1 YEAR TO 2.5 YEARS	PRESCHOOL 2.5 YEARS TO 5 YEARS	SCHOOL AGE 5 YEARS TO 9 YEARS
FURNISHINGS	Couch/futon/easy chair Changing table Adult rocker Cribs/cradles Infant bounce chair Cubbies/bins High chair/sassy seat Child access shelves Nest/wading pool	In addition: Child book rack Chairs/seating cubes Booster seats Tubs Child rockers Cots/mats Pillows Tablecloths	In addition: Small play tables Work bench Room Dividers Small rugs Sand/water table Carpet squares Card tables	In addition: Tents Hammock T.V. trays Car trays
LARGE MOTOR	Mats/pillows Beach balls Push/pull toys Small wagon Foam rolls Tunnel Strollers Sling/backpack	In addition: Stairs/slide Rocking boat Barrel Wheelbarrows No-pedal trikes Variety of balls Portable climber Rebounder	In addition: Balance beam Pedal wheel toys Larger wagons Shovels/rakes Hula hoops Planks/triangles	In addition: Sports balls Roller/ice skates Basketball hoop Jump ropes Skateboards Scooters
DRAMATIC PLAY	Baby dolls Stuffed animals Rubber animals Rubber people Puppets Hats Plexiglass mirrors	In addition: Large doll furniture Dress-up clothes and hats Child-size furniture Plastic cooking sets Blankets/Tents Boxes/suitcases Cars/Trucks Real pots/pans	In addition: Doll houses Plastic food Clothespins Play money/ Cash register Kitchen utensils/ Trays Prop Boxes Purses/luggage Play telephone	In addition: Small dolls Castle sets Mobile Balance scale Microphone Stage Fabric Plants/boxes
BLOCKS/ CONSTRUCTION	Fiberboard Blocks Foam blocks Bucket and blocks Shoeboxes	In addition: More blocks Large trucks Large train Snap blocks Waffle blocks Crates	In addition: Unit blocks Perna blocks Planks Derrick/pulleys Wheelbarrow Woodworking tools/hat/belts Dominoes/lots of blocks	In addition: More planks Plastic crates More tools Tri-wall cardboard Plastic/wood wheels, nuts bolts
CREATIVE ART	Finger paint Simple prints Wall hangings Sculpture Mobiles Messy mats/tarps/ plastic tablecloths	In addition: Thick crayons Large brushes Chalk/markers Chalkboard Playdough Ink stamps Paste	In addition: Easel Small brushes Water colors Modeling clay and wax Collage material Glue Scissors	In addition: Tri-wall cardboard Styrofoam pieces Clay Sewing machine Badge maker Camera Camcorder
SENSORY/SAND/ WATER/SCIENCE	Dish/garden tubs Tub toys Sponges Plants Aquariums/birdfeeders Animals Windchimes	In addition: Buckets/jars Funnels/sifters Measuring cups/pitchers Magnifiers Large magnets Flashlights	In addition: Electric frying pan Incubator Ant farm Balance scales Thermometer Magnets/prisms	In addition: Microscopes Rock tumblers Tape measures Oven Motors
BOOKS/ LANGUAGE/ MUSIC	Cloth books Hard board books Posters Photos Records/tapes Music boxes Musical mobiles	In addition: Picture books Read-To books Play telephones Simple instruments Headphones	In addition: More books Magnetic letters/Lotto Typewriter Telephones Thick pencils Musical keyboard Instrument set Scarves/ribbons	In addition: Computer and software Easy read books Chapter books Tune/Life type books Notebooks
PERCEPTUAL MOTOR/GAMES/ MANIPULATIVES/ MATH	Mobiles Cradle gyms Busy boxes Rattles Prisms	In addition: Pop beads Stack/nesting toys Large pegboards Lock boards Pounding bench Poker chips Sorting boxes	In addition: Small pegboards/ Puzzles Thread boards Table blocks/parquet blocks Tyco/Lego/Lazy blocks Abacus Lacing boards Nuts and bolts	In addition: Board games/ Skill games Cards/checkers Dominoes Looms Cuisenaire rods Calculators Models

CHILDCRAFT EDUCATION CORP.

This guide was made possible by a generous contribution from Childcraft Education Corp. — manufacturers and distributors of quality furniture, toys, and educational materials for your early childhood program.

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MARKETING TIP SHEET
FOR FAMILY DAY CARE PROVIDERS

Marketing family day care means educating the public — it is the process of communicating who you are, what you do, and why your work is important.

Family Day Care providers tell us they find it difficult to know how to market their programs, as well as how to speak out on behalf of the family day care field. This is not unusual in any profession. Most people feel shy and uncomfortable at the thought of self-promotion.

The key is to think about marketing as a series of steps. Take one step at a time, and give yourself the opportunity to feel at ease and to gain confidence.

What follows is a list of steps you can take. First, think about how to describe who you are and what you do during the day. Think about marketing your program to family, friends, parents of the children in your care, and the community at-large. When you feel more comfortable with the language and the process, you might want to begin sharing your thoughts and concerns with community leaders, legislators, and the media.

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

TO MARKET YOUR FAMILY DAY CARE PROGRAM

STEP 1: Create a scrapbook to show to prospective clients (parents). Include materials that explain your policies, daily schedule (activities, menus) and other items such as your letter of agreement or contract, fee schedule and a list of resources (books, night time baby-sitters).

STEP 2: Think about the knowledge and skills you have. Let people know about your credentials. Share information about the training you have received (such as First Aid, CPR, child development classes), the degrees or certificates you have earned, your affiliations (such as a local association or support group), your state-issued license or certificate, and evidence of participation in the Child Care Food Program. The fact that you may be a mother or grandmother is also very important to prospective clients.

STEP 3: Remind friends and relatives that you are a family day care provider and would be happy to talk with others about the services you provide. Get a business card and spread it around. You might even offer them, as well as your current clients, a fee for referring new families to you.

STEP 4: Inform individuals and organizations that have contact with prospective clients about your service. Childbirth instructors, the PTA, YMCA, scout groups, elementary school counselors and secretaries, social service agencies, hospitals, churches and synagogues, and the community affairs offices of local employers are often asked for referrals to family day care providers. Other providers (both family day care and center-based) whose programs are full are also good sources for referral.

A Marketing Kit for Family Day Care Providers produced by The National Council of Jewish Women, 53 West 23rd Street, New York, NY 10010 (212) 645-4048

STEP 5: Hold an open house, a coffee party, or sponsor an event for current and prospective clients. Your current clients are probably your biggest fans. They will help advertise you and your program to others and will enjoy the open house or special event as well. Design a business card and carry it at all times, so you can pass it out whenever people are interested in your program.

STEP 6: Offer to speak at association meetings and functions in your community. You might speak on a specific topic or just inform the association's members about who you are and what you do.

STEP 7: Advertise your name and telephone number in the phone book, the local weekly shopper paper, on bulletin boards, and through the closest child care resource and referral agency.

STEP 8: Design a logo with the name of your program (or let the children do it!) and have it printed on t-shirts, knapsacks or diaper bags, stickers, or buttons. Once artwork is created it can be used in many ways. You can use your logo on flyers and on your business cards too. You might go to a community college or high school graphic arts department for student assistance in creating your logo.

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

TO IMPROVE THE IMAGE OF FAMILY DAY CARE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

STEP 1: Form an association or support group of other family day care providers, or join one that already exists. Choose activities to do together from the following list.

- Hold regular meetings to discuss areas of interest and concern, share resources, and receive training.
- Appoint a "Media-Watch Team" to read specific magazines and newspapers regularly and follow radio and television shows to look for stories about family day care or opportunities for stories about family day care. Develop a mailing list of reporters and editors who cover the early childhood field and who should receive information about family day care. Establish personal contact with reporters.
- Join with other members to lobby elected officials about family day care needs.
- Identify the community relations departments of major employers in your area and offer to speak to their employees about family day care at a "brown bag lunch."
- Plan various events to celebrate family day care in your community — conferences, workshops and seminars; celebrations, picnics and fairs; shopping mall exhibits; open houses and tours. The Week of the Young Child is a good time to do this. (the first week of April).
- Speak about family day care to local groups such as the National Council of Jewish Women, Junior League, League of Women Voters, Kiwanis Club, Rotary Club, and Chamber of Commerce.
- Create a newsletter, design a public relations or parent education campaign, or prepare a public service announcement to educate the general public about the value of family day care in your community.

Issues you might want to discuss and act upon include:

- "The Importance of Family Day Care to the Economy of this Community"
- "Employer Support for Child Care: Workable Ways in Which Employers Can Address Employee Needs"
- "Zoning: How Local Codes Affect Family Day Care"
- "Local and Federal Support for Child Care"
- "Family Day Care Regulation"
- "Working with Resource and Referral Agencies, and Other Ways to Find Clients"
- "Parent-Provider Relationships"
- "Avoiding Burn Out and Isolation"
- "Legal, Tax and Insurance-Related Aspects of Operating a Family Day Care Home"
- "Raising Reimbursement Rates and Using Scholarships or Sliding Scales to Support the Full Cost of Quality Family Day Care."

STEP 2: Develop partnerships with other professionals and organizations that have access to the people you want to reach.

■ Create a flyer or brochure that describes family day care and distribute it through pediatricians' offices; children's toy, clothing and book stores; local hospitals; restaurants catering to families; and childbirth instructors.

■ Contact social service agencies, counselors, and family therapists to let them know what you do.

■ Offer to speak at professional association meetings or community service clubs, or to send information to their members.

■ Become a member or join the board of directors, advisory boards or task forces of affiliated organizations.

STEP 3: Write to your community leaders and legislators about your concerns, and arrange special meetings to discuss family day care in your community.

■ In a letter or position paper, state your concerns clearly and concisely, and suggest workable solutions to problems.

■ Hold a discussion on issues of concern with other providers (and parents). Choose three or four members of the group to meet with key decision makers in your community.

■ Invite community leaders and legislators to tour family day care homes in your community.

■ Invite key officials and decision makers to attend an open forum to discuss family day care in your community.

Possible topics for discussion include:

• *"The role of family day care in caring for children in our community".*

Plan various events to celebrate family day care in your community — conferences, workshops and seminars; celebrations, picnics and fairs; shopping mall exhibits; open houses and tours.

Discuss different types of child care settings in your community. Highlight family day care as a stimulating and educational environment for children, and one that is convenient, comfortable, consistent, and flexible for parents. You might ask your colleagues to relate personal stories showing how their family day care home influences the lives of the children and parents they serve.

• *"Steps community leaders, private industry, and concerned individuals can take to improve family day care in our area."*

Describe family day care in your community. Explore ways in which family day care could be supported and suggest ways in which community leaders, private industry, and concerned individuals can help. Create a plan for action, and assign tasks to individual members of the group.

For preparing your presentations, materials, and strategies this kit contains:

Speaking Out: Early Childhood Advocacy, excerpted from Speaking Out: Early Childhood Advocacy by Stacie G. Goffin and Joan Lombardi.

STEP 4: Contact the media. Take advantage of key times during the year, such as the Week of the Young Child, when the media typically look for stories about child care. It helps to build relationships with reporters.

■ Write a letter to the editor, an opinion editorial or a guest column and send it to your local daily or weekly newspapers.

■ Write your own article and submit it to the editors of your local daily or weekly newspapers.

■ Compile several photos with appropriate captions that tell the family day care story the way you want it told, and submit them to the editors or reporters of your local newspapers.

■ Submit a press release on a particular subject or event to your daily or weekly newspapers.

■ Give an interview to a newspaper, radio, or cable television reporter. Provide the media with positive stories and appropriate photos about family day care. If a photographer is present, direct

him or her in shooting appropriate pictures. Prepare a scrapbook or media kit to share with the press. Include such items as your training and experience, certificates of accomplishment, photos, newsletters, and a list of typical weekly activities and menus.

■ Create a positive, noncontroversial public service announcement (PSA) for radio or local access television.

■ Hold a press conference or open house for newspaper, radio, and television reporters to announce an event or react to positive or negative coverage of family day care.

Possible topics for articles you might want to write or suggest include:

"Marie Velez shows how being a family day care provider is a "real" job, not just babysitting."

Profile yourself. Tell why you chose this field. Maybe it is because you want to make an important difference in the lives of young children. Maybe it is because you enjoy caring for children of particular ages, say, infants. Maybe it is because you want to experience the joy of nurturing children and families and invest in the well-being of your community.

Demonstrate your professionalism. By giving examples from your day-to-day activities, show that you have the wisdom and love of a parent, the knowledge of a social worker, the skill of a teacher, the tact of a mediator, the patience of a saint, and the savvy of an entrepreneur running a small business.

"Karen Porter finds that family day care is the child care of choice for many parents."

Give examples from your own experience (e.g., some of your clients) that demonstrate why parents and their children like your family day care home.

You might relate a story about how you helped a single parent who needed a quality program that was close enough to home, and one that would take her child at 6:30 a.m. so that she could get to work.

Or you might tell a story that shows how you try to make each child's experience as "homey" as possible — by having children of various ages (like a family), by carrying out daily activities (such as meeting the mail carrier, baking cookies, folding and sorting laundry). Explain that these are perfect, natural learning opportunities for young children.

For preparing your presentations, materials, and strategies this kit contains:

- *Making News: A Family Day Care Provider's Guide to Working with the News Media*: a guide for how to conduct an interview; write a letter to the editor, opinion editorial or guest column; prepare a photo release; write a press release; prepare a PSA; and convene a press conference.
- *Facts About Family Day Care*, NCJW Fact Sheet #1.
- *Facts About Child Care*, NCJW Fact Sheet #3.
- *Facts About Family Day Care Regulation*, NCJW Fact Sheet #4.

FAMILY DAY CARE RESOURCE LIST

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Information Service
1834 Connecticut Avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20009
(800) 424-2460
Contact: Pat Spahr

National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA)
2116 Campus Drive, SE
Rochester, MN 55904
(507) 287-2022
Contact: Nancy Kolben

National Association for Family Day Care (NAFDC)
725 Fifteenth Street N.W.
Suite 505
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 347-3300
Contact: Barbara Taylor

National Council of Jewish Women
53 West 23rd Street
New York, NY 10010
(212) 645-4048
Contact: Pat Ward

Wheelock College
200 The Riverway
Boston, MA 02215
(617) 734-5200
Contact: Kathy Modigliani

Windflower Enterprises
142 South Claremont Street
Colorado Springs, CO 80918
(719) 520-1614
Contact: Cheryl Ann Whitehead

FOR MARKETING HELP:
CWM Marketing Group
53 Sussex Road
Tenafly, NJ 07670
(201) 871-3159
Contact: Cynthia Massarsky

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MAKING NEWS:

A FAMILY DAY CARE PROVIDER'S GUIDE TO WORKING WITH THE NEWS MEDIA

Adapted by the National Council of Jewish Women National Family Day Care Project, from *Making News: An Affiliate Guide to Working with the News Media* by Rebecca Leet, National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1989.

Few issues have gained newsworthiness in recent years as those affecting young children. These are the very issues about which family day care providers care deeply and about which they are experts. Family Day Care Providers can become information resources for the news media and help ensure that local news stories are as accurate, understandable, and helpful as possible. This Guide is intended to help you work effectively with the news media. It is purposefully brief and practically oriented. Some of the details may seem elementary, but they are necessary and should be observed carefully; extraneous suggestions have not been included.

The Guide is divided into two sections: what you should know before you start and how to execute the basics of publicity. The first section is as important as the second; perhaps the greatest mistake made in seeking media attention is not taking the time to think through the objective and message before starting your effort.

You should be able to answer the "what" and "why" questions before you ever approach a reporter or editor. Answering each question is essential to being well prepared and to using this scarce news opportunity as effectively as possible.

The editor of your local newspaper just said you could have one headline and three sentences on the front page of the newspaper to say anything you want. What do you say? Why do you want to say it?

Both questions are equally important; do not assume that you know the goal of your communication. Assess your goal realistically; do not try to cover too much. Your three main points should fit in a headline and three sentences. Work with your local association to decide what your goal is in seeking news coverage; then decide how to state your message.

For example, your goal may be to let the public know that local zoning laws make it difficult, expensive or impossible to legally care for children in family day care homes. What public do you really want to reach? Parents? Educators? Public officials? Although you may want to raise the awareness of all three groups, only one will be your primary target. The kind of information you emphasize and the statements you make will be colored by your decision about which public you want to reach most.

What kind of action do you want to follow from your pronouncement? Do you want public officials to adjust local zoning

ordinances? Or parents to speak out on your behalf?

FROM INFORMATION TO NEWS

For information to be transformed into news requires two things: action and public interest. Without public interest, virtually no information is reported by the news media. However, in addition to public interest, a news medium needs a reason for reporting a story today rather than next month; it needs, in the language of reporting, a "news peg."

CREATING NEWS PEGS

Here are some ways that you can create a "news peg" to draw media coverage to an issue:

- Hold a press conference to announce the release of a report on the subject, to announce a position of the local association on the issue, or to call on local officials to undertake action on the issue.

- Create an event by having a well-known expert from the community, or an important public official, make a speech about the issue.

- Take advantage of the "season" to attract public attention to the issue. For example, almost every newspaper prints back-to-school and child care features around Labor Day. Plan ahead and suggest specific topics for that time. Or, suggest April as the time for articles related to family day care, since this is when the *Week of the Young Child* is celebrated.

- If the issue has become news nationally, call the newspaper and suggest to the editor or reporter that she or he do a story on how the issue is being handled locally. If an issue has been reported locally, call the editor or reporter the day the story comes out and ask if any follow-up stories are being done. If so, explain how you can help provide information for subsequent stories.

MEDIA LISTINGS & MAILING LISTS

Your local association or support group should create a media listing notebook that contains a mailing list of reporters and editors who should receive press releases. This notebook should also contain other important information on each newspaper, radio, and television outlet in your area. Be sure this information is passed along to those in charge of media coverage.

At least once a year, survey the news media outlets in your area and update all media listings. The lists are time-consuming to create, and it is best to gather the information before it is needed for a press release or other press event.

FOR NEWSPAPERS

All daily and weekly newspapers in your area should be included in your newspaper listing. Include the newspaper's name and address, the name or title of the person to whom a release should be mailed and her or his telephone number, and the paper's publication days and deadlines. If the newspaper publishes any special sections—on certain days of the week or at certain times of the year—these should also be noted, with their deadlines and contact persons. In large cities, the "coverage area" of the paper should also be listed. Papers do not cover news out of their area (for example,

SAMPLE NEWSPAPER LISTING

1. Daily newspapers

Name Address Contact Phone Publication deadline

Special sections contact

Date of publication Deadline Coverage

2. Weekly newspapers

Name Address Contact Phone Publication deadline

Special sections contact

Date of publication Deadline Coverage

a suburban paper covering one suburb would not report on a story happening in another suburb).

FOR RADIO

All radio stations in your area should be included in your listings, even if the station is not now broadcasting a local news program (next year it might, and when you update the list you will know to call it). The listing should include the station's call letters, address, telephone number, and the day and time of any special public affairs or interview programs broadcast. The listing should also include the name of the producer of each special program and the title of the person to whom releases should be sent (at radio stations, this is almost always the News Assignment Editor). Also include whether the station accepts public service announcements, and if so, to whom they should be sent (usually, the Public Service Director).

FOR TELEVISION

The information for television stations is the same as for radio stations. In addition to asking about public service announcements, ask whether the TV station provides any "talk-back" opportunity for the public on any of their news shows (essentially a TV letter-to-the-editor) and find out the appropriate contact person.

WIRE SERVICES

You should also determine whether the Associated Press(AP) and United Press International (UPI) have bureaus in your area and, if so, get their address, telephone number, and the name/title of the person to whom releases are to be sent.

INTERVIEWING

The key to a successful interview is knowing what you want to say, not in a general sense, but very specifically. Here are some interviewing tips:

■ Before you seek a news interview, know exactly what information you want that reporter to report.

■ Do not state your key points once and think the reporter caught them; use later questions to reiterate your most important facts or opinions.

■ If the reporter has not asked about an area that you want covered, volunteer the information. Say something like, "There's an important area we haven't touched on, and that is..."

■ Do not try to be an expert on everything. If you do not the know the answer to a question, say so. If you could easily find the answer, tell the reporter you will call back with the information. Then be sure to follow through!

■ Suggest related stories, but do not be heavy handed. If the reporter/editor is not interested, do not persist.

■ If, after the interview, you discover you made a factual mistake, call the reporter and correct your error. The reporter will have more, not less, regard for your credibility if you do this.

■ If the reporter is writing furiously, trying to get down what you are saying, pause and let her or him catch up. Or speak more slowly. If you are uncertain whether the reporter understood what you said, say something like, "Let me say that another way..." and reiterate the thought.

■ Above all, do not use jargon. If you must use a phrase or word with a technical meaning, explain it. Remember, everyday words for you may be jargon to those without a similar background. Will people really understand what you mean?

■ If you are going to be interviewed by a television reporter and can prepare ahead of time, reduce your one or two main points to three sentences. Your remarks have a better chance of being used if they are only 20 to 30 seconds long.

THE PRESS RELEASE

You face the same challenge in writing a press release that reporter faces in writing a story: How do you catch the readers' attention and hold it long enough to present your information? In this case, your reader is an editor or reporter.

CONTENT

Not surprisingly, a good press release reads like a news story.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION OF
FAMILY DAY CARE PROVIDERS
22 MAIN STREET
ANYWHERE, USA 00000

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: Susan Alverez (222) 555-1060

ANYTOWN MAYOR FRED DURKIN AWARDS $10,000 TO

FAMILY DAY CARE ASSOCIATION

Mayor Fred Durkin will be the featured speaker at a special celebration this Saturday to kick off a project funded by Goodright Department Stores. The award of $10,000 will be presented to the Downtown Association of Family Day Care Providers as part of a national effort devoted to improving the quality of family day care.

The celebration will begin at 10AM in front of the Goodright Department Store located in the Centerbrook Mall. City and state officials, Goodright representatives and members of the Downtown Association of Family Day Care Providers will be in attendance. Parents, children, family day care providers and the general public are invited to attend.

Family day care is child care provided in a private home. Nationally, family day care is the leading "care of choice" because of its small, home-like atmosphere. The Downtown Association of Family Day Care Providers assists parents in finding child care programs for their children. It also provides scholarships to family day care providers for training and accreditation programs. For further information, contact The Downtown Association of Family Day Care Providers at (222) 555-1060.

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■ It has a headline that grabs the attention of the reporter or editor. A good release will often carry virtually the same headline as the subsequent newspaper story.

■ It is written in an inverted pyramid style with the most important information first and the remainder in descending order of importance. The first paragraph, called the lead, summarizes the major facts of the story and usually is no longer than two sentences.

■ It uses action verbs. If possible, it conveys some of the information in quotations, to enliven the release. Quotations are always attributed.

FORMAT

Editors and reporters are accustomed to seeing press releases in standard format and are more likely to read ones presented to them in this manner.

■ Follow the format in the sample press release. Include the date of the release; the name, address, and telephone number of the originator; and the "release time."

■ The "release time" should either be FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE or should read HOLD FOR RELEASE UNTIL (give date and time of day for release).

■ Type the release in a double-spaced format.

■ Include an underlined headline in all caps.

■ At the end of the release, type one of the following symbols to signify the end of your release: "###" or "-30-".

■ If the release is more than one page in length, type "—more—" at the bottom of each non-final page.

■ At the very end of the release (after you have typed "###" or "-30-"), briefly describe your association or support group. Include its purpose, size, and number of years in existence.

THE PRESS CONFERENCE

Next to press releases, press conferences are the most common technique for generating media stories. A successful press conference takes careful planning and attention to detail.

ORGANIZING A PRESS CONFERENCE

The most critical decisions regarding your press conference are:

■ Who will be your spokesperson? This must be someone who is articulate, knows the subject, and can think quickly on her or his feet to respond to reporters' questions.

■ What time will your press conference be? The best time for a press conference is around 10 a.m. or 2 p.m. Avoid early morning (before 9 a.m.) or late afternoon (after 4 p.m.). Evening press conferences are never held, except for the President of the United States.

■ Where will your press conference be held? The easier it is for reporters to get there, the more likely they will be to show up. Do not hold your press conference in an out-of-the-way place. If the issue can be illustrated by staging the event at a particular site, consider holding it there—but carefully assess mitigating factors, such as the need for permission to hold it there, the possibility it could be rained out (if outdoors), or the distraction of surrounding noises.

Send an announcement of the press conference, including some information on the issue so that it arrives between 2 and 7 days before the event. Often the press release developed for the press conference will be sent, with a HOLD FOR RELEASE label. A cover sheet will state when and where the press conference will occur and will identify the spokesperson by name and title.

Follow up with a phone call to the appropriate person to make sure that the announcement was received and to see if additional information is needed.

Television stations will be much more interested in the press conference if there will be some action involved, rather than just someone standing up and speaking. If that is all your press conference will have, help the station find someplace it could go ahead of time (a day or two) to film people in action related to the issue. Having film footage with action is often the difference between getting on television or not.

EXECUTING THE PRESS CONFERENCE

If there is a good chance that the

spokesperson will be asked a question that she or he cannot answer, for whatever reason, have resource people at the press conference who can be called upon to answer questions.

Have extra copies of everything for the press: press releases, copies of the report (if one is released), copies of the opening statement, brochures describing what family day care is, news clippings of related stories, etc.

Distribute copies of the opening statement a few minutes before the start of the press conference. The press conference should open with a statement of between 2 and 5 minutes. It should highlight the most important points (a call for action, vote on an issue, findings of a study—whatever the reason for the press conference).

As much as possible, the spokesperson should avoid just reading the statement. Often this is the time when television and radio reporters will be taping what they need for their story and a "spoken" statement is much more effective than one that is "read".

Begin the press conference on time; certainly no more than 5 minutes late. End the press conference as soon as interest lags. Usually, press conferences last between 20 and 30 minutes.

Put on each chair at the press conference a sheet asking for the reporter's name, affiliation, phone number, and address, so that you can update your media list. Do not assume that this reporter replaces another from that paper who has covered you—they may represent different sections. After the press conference, follow up by calling to ask if this reporter rather than another should now be on your list.

Be prepared for follow-up work. Reporters may have questions no one at the press conference could answer; make sure that one or two people are available the rest of the day to handle additional media requests for interviews and information and to handle calls from the public prompted by the stories.

EDITORIALS, GUEST COLUMNS, & LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

You can draw public attention to your position on important issues by taking advantage of editorials, guest columns or "op-eds", and letters to the editor.

EDITORIALS

Most newspapers have a staff of several editorial writers, and usually each editorial writer has several issue areas that she or he writes about. With television stations, the Editorial Director usually writes all the editorials.

Although there are some exceptions, most good editorial writers will be open to hearing from you in the same way that reporters are. You should not be afraid to pick up the telephone and call an editorial writer to urge her or him to write about an issue or to give your position on an issue on which you suspect a story may be prepared. Almost always, editorials occur within a day or two of a news story on the same subject.

Deal with an editorial writer as you would a reporter. Offer to meet with her or him or to send information. Provide the same kind of data, explanation, and opinions as you would with a reporter. If you send the information, always follow up with a phone call to make sure it was received.

GUEST COLUMNS

Most newspapers offer opportunities for experts to write guest editorial columns on important issues of the day; sometimes these are called "op-eds", a term originally coined because the columns were run on the page opposite the newspaper's editorial page. Now such columns may be run in different sections of the paper.

Increasingly, newspapers are seeking local experts to write these columns, although some of the largest newspapers—such as The Washington Post, The New York Times, and The Los Angeles Times—still prefer national experts. A call to the editorial page editor or the section's editor will clarify the paper's policy on guest columns. When you are creating your media listings, ask each newspaper what opportunities exist for writing guest columns. It may be that your paper runs columns in a different section from the editorials, such as the "Lifestyle" section.

Guest columns are usually written about issues that are in the news, though not always. A "timely" occasion, such as parents enrolling toddlers in family day care months ahead of time, may

provide enough of a "news peg" for an editor to accept a guest column on the issue, even if the news editor does not consider it newsworthy enough for a story. Approach the editor like you would a reporter or news editor. Explain why something is timely and should be written about. Provide relevant data and present your credentials to persuade the editor that you would be a worthy writer for the column. Do not expect to have a guest column accepted by the newspaper often. Once a year would be a very good track record. Don't give up if your first couple of ideas are rejected, or if your idea is accepted but the column you write is rejected. Ask an editor why a column was not run—it may not have been written in the style of most guest columns, or it could have been too lengthy, or maybe it didn't contain enough information. If you can learn from your failures you may succeed later in getting a guest column published.

Most guest columns are between 750 and 900 words long. Ask the editor how long the column should be before you start writing, and do not exceed the limit. Ask the editor what the deadline for submission is, and do not expect the piece to be printed if you miss your deadline. Often you can use material prepared for another use, such as a speech, and rewrite it for publication as a guest column.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor of a newspaper are, invariably, one of the best read sections of any newspaper. For this reason alone, they make an excellent place to get the word out on issues you care about. Almost always, letters are accepted only in reaction to news stories in that paper.

There are several key factors to remember when writing a letter to the editor:

- Your letter to the editor should be in the mail the day the story appears—at the latest, mail it the following morning.

- Select the most important one or two points that you want to make and do so very briefly. Succinct letters have a better chance of being published than long ones.

- Don't expect more than two or, at most, three short paragraphs to be chosen from your letter. Many times it will be only one.

- Sign your name, and, if appropriate, identify yourself in a manner relevant to the issue (provider, local association president, etc.).

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

A public service announcement (PSA) is a short 10- or 20-second spot similar to, and scheduled like, a commercial. PSAs are aired free of charge by radio stations. Their use varies greatly in different parts of the country. The best way to gauge whether stations in your area carry them is to listen for them.

PSAs are only used to announce information related to non-controversial issues. Likely topics include announcements of:

- a brochure on choosing a good family day care home.

- workshops on starting a family day care program.

- a telephone hotline, sponsored by your family day care support group, to counsel parents on what toys are appropriate for different ages.

Write the PSA exactly as you want it read. The broadcaster will read it directly from your copy.

CONTENT

- Write conversationally, but include a lot of information.

- Include pertinent facts such as who, what, when, where, why, and how. If possible, repeat important telephone numbers and/or dates at the close.

- Start the PSA with a catchy phrase, if possible.

- Keep sentences short and the wording simple.

- PSAs must be precisely timed, at 10, 20, or 30 seconds. Send PSAs of all lengths to each station.

FORMAT

- Follow the format in the example for the release date, name, address, and telephone number of the originator.

- Indicate the length, in seconds, of the PSA.

■ Type the PSA, double-spaced.

Television stations also broadcast PSAs, but less frequently. The cost of producing broadcast-quality PSAs for television is beyond most budgets. However, you may be able to purchase PSAs developed by the national association and have them personalized for individual use.

SAMPLE RADIO PSAs

10 SECONDS

LOOKING FOR THE BEST CHILD CARE FOR YOUR BABY? THE DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY DAY CARE PROVIDERS WANTS TO HELP YOU. CALL 234-5555 FOR THEIR FREE BROCHURE.

20 SECONDS

ARE YOU TRYING TO FIND THE BEST CHILD CARE PROGRAM FOR YOUR BABY OR TODDLER? GET HELP FROM THE EXPERTS. THE DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY DAY CARE PROVIDERS HAS A FREE BROCHURE ON THE SUBJECT. JUST CALL 234-5555 FOR YOUR COPY. THAT'S 234-5555.

30 SECONDS

IF YOU'RE LIKE MOST WORKING PARENTS, ONE OF YOUR BIGGEST WORRIES IS CHILD CARE. NOW THERE IS A FREE BROCHURE, FROM CHILD CARE EXPERTS, TO HELP YOU ASSESS WHETHER YOU HAVE THE BEST CARE FOR YOUR BABY OR TODDLER. IT'S FREE FOR THE ASKING FROM THE DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY DAY CARE PROVIDERS. FOR A COPY, CALL 234-5555. OR WRITE THE ASSOCIATION AT 98765 AMERICA STREET, DOWNTOWN, OHIO 45444. THAT PHONE NUMBER AGAIN IS 234-5555.

PHOTO RELEASES

Pictures are often "read" by more people than news stories, and there are picture releases to newspapers just as there are written releases. Picture or photo releases usually are accepted by newspapers only in smaller towns and suburbs, but they can be a valuable means of getting your name in the newspaper. Picture releases must be mailed quickly — within days of the event.

CONTENT

■ A picture with action has greater interest than one without. If your only picture possibility is a speaker, at least capture the speaker with an animated expression or while gesturing.

■ Eliminate extraneous background material; close in on the action.

■ In the accompanying caption, identify every person in the picture (from left to right) with her name and, if appropriate, her title.

■ Write the caption briefly, but interestingly — try to write the caption that the newspaper would write. Remember to tell who, what, when, where, why and how the action took place.

FORMAT

■ Use only black and white film.

■ Tell the film processor to print 5" X 7" glossy prints.

■ Tape the caption to the back of the picture.

■ The picture caption should be typed, double-spaced. In addition to the caption itself, the typed release should include the date of the release and the name, address, and telephone number of the originator. Almost all photo releases are FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE.

ncjw

SPEAKING OUT:
EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVOCACY

Excerpted from *Speaking Out: Early Childhood Advocacy* by Stacie G. Goffin and Joan Lombardi, National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1988.

INFORMING PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Decision makers need to hear from you to stay informed about the issues that you confront daily. Both elected and appointed officials must respond to a wide variety of issues.

LEGISLATORS

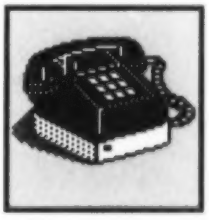
Legislators generally make laws, appropriate funds, monitor government activities, investigate problems, respond to constituent concerns, and to some degree educate citizens about the issues.

Your legislators most likely include two U.S. senators and one U.S. representative (all three represent you in Washington, D.C.), one state senator and one state delegate (both represent you in your state capital), and a host of local town, city, and/or county council members.

U.S. senators and representatives work full-time in their positions, but state and local legislators often work part-time as elected officials and hold other jobs in the community. Federal and state legislators often have home offices in their districts as well as offices in the capital. Ask your local League of Women Voters or reference librarian for contact information.

Most legislators have assistants to help them sort through the complexity and number of issues. Call your legislator's office to find out the names and responsibilities of legislative staff, what issues the legislator is interested in, and what committees she or he serves on.

In addition, find out how your legislator voted on key issues related to children. The Children's Defense Fund (in Washington, D.C.) regularly compiles information on the voting records of members of the U.S. Congress on children's issues.



As you establish a relationship with legislators and their staffs, they will come to rely on you as a community expert on family day care issues.

It also may be useful to know some personal information about your legislator. Does she or he have children? Are any in child care or preschool? What about grandchildren? Do any members of the family work in education? Such information, along with an understanding of the political climate, will help guide you in your advocacy efforts (Wilkins & Blank, 1986).

Once you identify the key people, begin a get-acquainted campaign (Hostetler, 1983). You may have 5 or 10 elected officials who represent you (federal, state, and local), so select one or two at a time to get to know. Be nonpartisan in whom you contact first, and avoid the temptation to focus only on those who have already demonstrated support for children's issues. Remember, your goal as an advocate is to provide information and change opinion.

The people you focus on will shift as issues and legislative proposals change. For example, in 1981, when human service programs were cut at the federal level, advocates turned their attention to state legislators. In 1988, when important early childhood legislation was introduced in Congress, U.S. senators and representatives were key figures.

Hostetler (1983) suggests that a good way to begin to get acquainted with elected officials is to send them a congratulatory letter upon their election or a simple letter of introduction. In either case, make your letter straightforward, precise, and positive. Provide basic facts

WHEN YOU INVITE A LEGISLATOR TO A PROGRAM

- **Telephone if time is short, or send a letter of invitation on official stationary, explaining the event.** Provide options for dates and times so the visit fits into the legislator's schedule.

- **Suggest inviting the local newspaper or television station.** The legislator's staff may assist in getting press coverage. Write a short press release describing the event. Work with the legislator's office to develop the material.

- **Outline points you want to make when you meet.** Determine what roles staff, parents, and board members will have in these discussions. Prepare short fact sheets to summarize your program and key points. Put them in a packet for the legislator and staff.

- **Talk about the visit in advance with children, parents, and staff.** Children should keep to their normal routine rather than perform for the legislator.

- **Be positive and gracious to the legislator.** Allow plenty of opportunities for her or him to ask questions and meet parents and children.

- **Follow up with a thank-you letter to the legislator and staff.**

about yourself and your work. You may want to include brief articles, fact sheets, or other relevant information.

Establishing a relationship takes continual contact. Perhaps you can put your legislator on a mailing list for your program's or association's newsletter. When you come across some important information, forward it with a note: "Just wanted to let you know what important activities the children and families in your district are involved in." By doing so you develop legislators' awareness of children's programs and issues. Even if they never thoroughly read the material, they know you are out there working with the families they represent.

Another way to keep in touch is to send "Dear Legislator" letters every few months. You receive letters about critical legislation as a constituent, so you can keep legislators informed about needs and issues you encounter.

One of the best ways to become acquainted with decision makers is to invite them to visit a high-quality program. Arrange a tour just before the legislative session begins, when the legislator is home on recess, or when the legislator is campaigning in your district (see "When You Invite a Legislator to a Program").

As you establish a relationship with legislators and their staffs, they will come to rely on you as a community expert on family day care issues. Your opinion will then have more significance when decisions are made.

ADMINISTRATORS

The executive branch of government—at the federal, state, or local level—administers the agencies that implement laws passed by the legislature.

At the federal level, the chief executive is the president. The president's cabinet is composed of appointed secretaries of the major departments. Family and children's programs are administered by a variety of agencies within several departments including Health and Human Services, Education, Agriculture, Justice, and Labor. These agencies are not always required to coordinate programs with each other.

Your state executive branch includes your governor and several appointees, somewhat similar to the federal structure. City and county governments, on the other hand, may have elected or appointed executives. Several state and local agencies are responsible for programs for children and families, and the degree of coordination among them varies. Some states have special agencies or offices to promote the interests of children. They may fund and administer programs or just report on and coordinate services.

Administrative officials who plan and monitor programs, such as licensing staff or early childhood specialists from various agencies, are usually informed about the issues we face. Many of them have had experience in the field. Nevertheless, they still rely on our expertise to keep them informed about how policy decisions affect programs and families and to provide ideas for future plans.

Elected and appointed administrators, such as the governor or mayor, are less likely to be informed on early childhood issues. You can become acquainted with and provide information to these key administrators just as you do with legisla-

tors by: introducing yourself, inviting them to visit a good program, and writing and calling them in response to specific issues.

BOARD, COUNCIL, AND COMMISSION MEMBERS

A wide variety of boards, councils, commissions, and citizens' advisory groups affect early childhood concerns. Members may be elected or appointed to these positions, and their expertise in the field varies. Some groups set policies; others are advisory. These groups include state and local school boards or advisory councils to administrative agencies and/or legislatures, and appointed study commissions (such as a Superintendent's Task Force on Early Childhood Education).

You can get to know the key players in these groups by reading your newspaper, attending public hearings, and obtaining copies of their reports. Contact the office that works with the group to obtain a list of all group members. For example, obtain your state school board member list from your state's education agency.

Your influence with these groups can

WHEN WRITING TO YOUR LEGISLATORS

■ **Avoid professional jargon.** Terms you use every day mean very little to them, just as legislative terms may be unfamiliar to you.

■ **Avoid ranting or tear-jerking approaches.** A poignant need or a grave injustice, simply told, can have far greater impact.

■ **Focus upon one issue per letter.** Keep the letter short.

■ **Use real-life examples to illustrate your point.** Legislators may use grassroots stories to persuade colleagues to cosponsor a bill or to vote for or against it. Your example may even enliven a member's speech or floor statement.

■ **Check that your facts are accurate.** Use the proper form of address. Refer to bills by name or number. Organize your arguments so they are clear and cogent.

■ **Avoid form letters.** However, if you are using a form letter, paraphrase, insert a personal example, use your own handwriting, or type it yourself.

■ **Open and close with statements that will establish rapport:** "I know you are concerned with the welfare of young children and will take appropriate action on this issue."

■ **Show your strength.** Mention the number of families you serve or the number of professionals you represent.

■ **Write (or call) more than once.** Your input is critical at three stages:
1. Initially, to urge your representative to cosponsor the bill.
2. Next, to encourage the committee to pass the proposed legislation and to encourage your representative to exercise pressure on the committee to pass it.
3. Before it comes to a full vote, to urge your representative to vote for the bill.

■ **Watch your timing.** If your member sits on a committee with jurisdiction over a bill, the time to make recommendations is before the committee has reported out the bill. (A bill is reported out when it is passed from the committee to the floor.) When time is running out, send telegrams or telephone your representative.

■ **Ask for a response.** Include your name and address on the letter (envelopes may be thrown away).

■ **Write a letter of appreciation if your representative acts in accordance with your recommendations.** Reiterate the specific, appropriate actions taken by your representative (this extends the life and focus of the issue). Let it be known you are spreading the good word in your group's newsletter or at a forthcoming meeting.

Adapted from "Children, the Congress, and You" by K. E. Allen, 1983, Young Children, 38(2), 71-75. Copyright 1983 by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Adapted by permission.

affect both legislative and administrative decisions. Often, once you have "gained the ear" of one member, you can have your opinions expressed to the group through this contact. Your attendance and testimony at the hearings, and responses to the groups' reports, are crucial. Citing their reports in fact sheets and letters to legislators and administrators can help build momentum for your issue.

RESPONDING TO LEGISLATION

When you get to know decision makers and build awareness of early childhood issues, you set the stage for you or your group to respond to, or propose, specific legislation to address these issues. Attempting to influence legislation at the local, state, or federal level is called lobbying. Although the term may sound intimidating, "it is nothing more than getting the right information to the right person at the right time" (Wilkins & Blank, 1987). Lobbying includes:

- Contacting legislators, their staff, or government employees to encourage them to propose, support, oppose, or otherwise influence legislation.
- Trying to get the public to share your views on the legislation and to take action on it.
- Advocating for the adoption or rejection of a particular piece of legislation (Children's Defense Fund, 1983).

As a private citizen, you have every right to express your views on legislation.

VISITING YOUR LEGISLATOR

A personal visit to your legislator's office, either in the capital or at home in the district office, is an effective way to discuss pending legislation or issues of concern (see "When Visiting Your Legislator").

You may feel intimidated on your first visit to a legislative office. Once you have done it, however, you will be encouraged by how easy it really was to talk with people who seemed interested in your issue. You may also be stirred to action by the need for more efforts on behalf of young children and their families.

WHEN VISITING YOUR LEGISLATOR

- **Know your legislator's record.** Find out how she or he voted on previous children's issues. If visiting a member of Congress, contact the Children's Defense Fund for its congressional voting record list for the year. If visiting a state legislator, contact a state advocacy group for more information on the legislator's record.
- **Schedule an appointment.** If your legislator is unavailable on that day, arrange to meet with the staff person who handles child and family issues. If you meet at the capital, arrange to see as many legislators as you can, allowing time to get from one office to the next between your appointments.
- **Draft an agenda.** List the early childhood issues you want to discuss. If you are going with a group, each person should play a role. One person can open the meeting, another can be the recorder, someone can keep the conversation on the agenda, and another can leave a fact sheet or other literature.
- **Arrive on time.** Meet your group in the hallway and go in together.
- **Build awareness of early childhood and family issues.** Know the facts about your community and program.
- **Listen carefully.** Be open to questions. If you do not have information, politely explain that you will do more research and get back with some answers.
- **Ask for support for your issues.** If your legislator does not make a commitment, tactfully state that you would like to know about her or his decision and that you will call after she or he has had time to give it more thought.
- **Follow up.** Send a thank-you letter to your legislator and to the staff member who helped arrange the visit. Include a summary of your position on the issue plus any new information from your community.
- **Maintain contact.** Regularly provide information about children's and family issues.

Adapted from Your Legislative Guide to Advocacy by the National P.T.A., Edited by M. B. Oakes. 1987, Washington, DC: National P.T.A.

Facts About Family Day Care

WHAT IS FAMILY DAY CARE?

Family day care is child care provided in the caregiver's home, rather than in a day care center or the child's home. It is the most widely used type of out-of-home care for young children in the United States. Virtually all family day care providers are women; the majority are married; and some care for their own young children in addition to the children of others. Many parents are able to arrange family day care services in their own neighborhoods with persons they already know or soon get to know on a personal, informal basis.

MYTHS AND REALITIES

Family day care has been neglected and frequently misunderstood by early childhood professionals as well as by the public. For many years there was a belief that once there were enough "good child care centers," family day care would simply disappear.

This attitude has kept family day care from getting the attention and support it deserves. Family day care has unique characteristics that make it the preferred option of many parents. We hope that this brief fact sheet will clarify some of the common misconceptions about family day care.

MYTH #1: Family day care providers are just "babysitters" working for "pin money."

Traditionally, family day care has not been viewed as a "real" job, but rather as a variation on the traditional female role of caring for children at home. The typically low earnings of family day care providers, and the fact that many are married and dependent upon the earnings of their spouses to make ends meet, have reinforced this view. Moreover, until recently, many states required women applying for family day care licenses to show that they had another source of income from a working husband, social security, or the like. This requirement officially confirmed the second-class status of family day care as an occupation.

REALITY: Family day care is a "real" and demanding occupation. Being a family day care provider "requires the wisdom of a parent, the knowledge of a social worker, the skill of a pediatrician, the tact of a mediator, the patience of a saint; not to mention the savvy of an entrepreneur running a small business." (June Solnit Sale, 1988) Caregivers work longer hours than the parents who purchase their services and assume responsibilities that equal those in more highly paid professions.

The earnings of family day care providers are not merely "pin money." Although the majority of family day care providers do have employed spouses, their own earnings make an important, and often essential, contribution to household income. For significant numbers of providers without other household income, family day care provides a living.

MYTH #2: Family day care is an undesirable and inferior substitute for center-based care.

For many years, family day care was officially treated as a form of custodial care. Licensing for family day care in many states was handled by local welfare departments along with licensing for foster care. This placement in the regulatory system made family day care seem custodial and of lesser educational value than center-based care.

REALITY: Research has shown that family day care has unique qualities that make it the preferred arrangement of many parents, especially for infants and toddlers. Those special qualities include:

- *A familiar, informal home environment;*
- *A small number of other children in care;*
- *Flexible hours;*
- *The consistency of a single caregiver;*
- *The opportunity for a close relationship with the caregiver;*
- *Close proximity to home, school, or place of work;*
- *The availability of care for all children in the family -- infant, toddler, preschooler, and school-age children;*
- *Reasonable prices compared to other options;*
- *A greater likelihood of accepting mildly ill children than other options;*
- *A greater likelihood of accepting special needs children.*

MYTH #3: The only way to guarantee quality family day care is through strict regulation.

Traditionally, regulation, through periodic inspection and licensing, has been government's primary tool for promoting adequate quality child care. However, many family day care providers are exempt from state licensing laws. Others operate outside these laws without fear of detection and, sometimes, without knowledge of their existence.

REALITY: Regulation is necessary to provide basic standards concerning the health and safety of children in family day care, but it does not ensure high quality care. Regulation is effective when used in combination with other methods for establishing high quality care that promote children's physical, social, emotional and cognitive development.

Effective strategies for promoting high quality family day care include the following:

- *Investing in training and other forms of supports for providers;*
- *Subsidizing provider income in order to attract and retain qualified people;*
- *Raising the reimbursement rate for subsidized care;*
- *Educating parents and potential funders about why the costs of quality care are necessarily high, and why investing in it should be a priority;*
- *Educating parents about what to look for in family day care;*
- *Advocating for family day care supports at the city, state and federal level.*

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Facts About Child Care

MYTH #1: Most married women don't really need to work.

REALITY: Most married women work out of economic necessity. Times have changed. The majority of today's families rely on two incomes to achieve and maintain a middle class standard of living, and a significant number of families need two incomes just to pull themselves above the poverty line. From 1979 to 1986, the earning power of husbands decreased by an average of 4% in constant dollars, increasing the economic pressure for the average married woman to join the paid labor force.

Young families, in particular, now depend on two paychecks to get by. When adjusted for inflation, the average earnings for young male workers (age 20-24) in 1986 were 26% less than earnings by the same age group 13 years earlier, leaving many young married women with no choice but to work. Moreover, work experience increases women's earning potential as insurance against economic hardship for themselves and their children in the event of divorce -- the odds of which are more than one in three for couples with dependent children.

MYTH #2: Non-maternal care is bad for children.

REALITY: The quality of care children receive is more important than who provides that care -- mother, father, grandmother, or paid caregiver. Most research shows that children in non-maternal care do just as well as children cared for exclusively by their mothers, as long as the quality of care is high. The basic ingredients of high quality child care are:

- **Small group size and a high caregiver/child ratio,** ensuring opportunities for individualized adult-child interaction and adequate supervision.
- **Continuity of caregivers,** allowing children to develop strong and stable relationships with the adults who care for them.
- **Caregivers who respond appropriately and effectively to the emotional and developmental needs of children in their care.**
- **Effective communication between caregivers and parents.**
- **A safe and stimulating environment** that promotes the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of children.

Ensuring high quality care is particularly difficult and expensive in the case of infants who require more individualized attention than older children. The prevalence of less than adequate infant day care in the United States may well explain recently reported research findings that non-maternal care during the first year of a child's life sometimes has negative impacts on children. Such findings underscore the importance of ensuring high quality child care for the sake of our children and society.

MYTH #3: The government is already spending a lot on child care.

REALITY: The only source of direct child care assistance to parents from the Federal government are funds distributed to states through the Title XX Social Services Block Grant, which has been severely cut over the past eight years.

Cuts in Title XX funding have coincided with increases in the number of children living in poverty and in need of subsidized care. Indeed, lack of affordable child care has become a major obstacle for single mothers trying to move from welfare to work and a major cause of poverty among working parents. Across the United States, hundreds of thousands of low income families eligible for Title XX subsidies are unserved because of a lack of government funds. For example, the Children's Defense Fund estimates that fewer than 10% of California's 1.1 million eligible children can be served given current funding levels.

The Dependent Care Tax Credit is the most important source of indirect governmental assistance for child care; however, it provides little or no help to lower incomes families. The Dependent Care Tax Credit is only refundable up to the amount of a family's tax liability. The credit is worthless to families in the lowest income brackets who pay no taxes, and the full benefit is only realized by families well above the poverty line.

There is virtually no Federal investment, and very little investment by state and local governments, in systematic efforts to develop the supply of high quality child care services in the United States. While government actively seeks to develop high quality elementary and secondary educational systems through investment in human resources, materials, and facilities, it invests almost nothing in the development of high quality child care services which play an increasingly prominent role in the early education of this country's children.

MYTH #4: The so-called "child care crisis" is not society's problem, but the parents' problem.

REALITY: The child care problems of working parents are also the problems of society, because the long-term social costs of inadequate care of the next generation will have negative consequences for us all.

Inadequate care of young children, by either parents or paid caregivers, is strongly linked to later social maladjustment, school failure and dropout, delinquency, crime, and economic dependence in adult life. If we allow today's children to be placed at risk, we also risk our nation's future. Now that the majority of mothers with young children must work to help maintain their families, there is an urgent need for good, safe, and affordable child care. Just as our nation invests in public education, we must now invest in the development of child care services that not only ensure children's physical well-being, but also actively promote social competence and cognitive development.

MYTH #5: Federal government intervention will solve our child care problems.

REALITY: While the Federal government can provide much needed leadership and some financial support, solutions will only be found through coordinated public-private initiatives at the local level that are responsive to each community's specific needs.

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Facts About Family Day Care Regulation

Most states regulate family day care in some way. These regulations vary enormously from state to state by method and by type of requirements.

■ **Methods of regulation.** The two major methods of regulation are licensing and registration. In order to become licensed, a provider's home usually must pass an on-site inspection; becoming registered usually involves provider self-inspection and self-report. Some states offer a choice of licensing or registration, others regulate family day care on a voluntary basis. Two states do not regulate family day care at all. (*The National State of Child Care Regulation 1986*, Gwen Morgan, Work/Family Directions).

■ **Requirements of regulation.** States' requirements for family day care regulation also vary tremendously. Requirements differ for: total group size; the number of infants, toddlers, and school-aged children allowed per provider; whether or not the provider's own children are counted; whether or not training is required; and how often a license must be renewed, if at all.

MYTHS AND REALITIES

The following myths and realities explore some of the central issues concerning family day care regulation.

MYTH #1: Family day care providers do not stand to gain anything from regulation.

REALITY: For most providers the benefits of becoming licensed or registered outweigh the costs. With the notable exception of providers who risk losing welfare benefits by "going public," most providers benefit from being regulated because they become eligible for many important supports. The major benefits of becoming licensed or registered are:

- **Providers become eligible to receive a substantial reimbursement from the Child Care Food Program for the cost of meals served to children in their homes.** In 1988, licensed providers who applied to the Child Care Food Program received on average almost $2,500 in reimbursements. Providers receive up to $2.21 per child per day regardless of parents' income.
- **Providers have greater access to clients.** Most resource and referral agencies and government agencies will refer only to regulated providers.
- **Providers have better access to insurance coverage.** Most insurance companies will cover only licensed providers.
- **Providers become eligible for important community supports.** Family day care can be a lonely, isolated job that carries little social recognition or economic reward. By entering the regulatory system, family day care providers gain access to the professional child care community which may include provider networks, training and support groups. Membership in this community gives providers a sense of professionalism and empowerment. Providers may also gain access to resources such as small grants for home improvements, salary enhancements, and toy and material lending libraries.

Providers need to be informed about regulation and its potential benefits. Many providers do not become regulated because they are unaware that regulation is the law, or because they lack information about how they could benefit from becoming licensed or registered. In order for regulation to be effective, providers must be made aware of it's potential advantages.

MYTH #2: Becoming regulated means that family day care providers will lose a large portion of their already substandard earnings by having to pay taxes.

REALITY: Most providers owe little if any tax because they can take substantial deductions; typically providers can deduct 50% - 75% of their income. Moreover, providers who take full advantage of the tax deductions available to them and receive the Child Care Food Program subsidy usually come out ahead financially. Providers can deduct:

- **A portion of their home expenses,** including: rent or mortgage, utilities, property insurance, property taxes, house depreciation, mortgage interest, household supplies, appliances, and furniture;
- **Other expenses associated with running a family day care business,** including: food costs, transportation, the costs for child care-related home improvements, toys, educational materials and equipment.

Providers who are "on the books" are more attractive to parents. Under the new tax laws (effective as of 1989), in order to claim a dependent care tax credit, parents must now provide the social security number of their children's caregiver.

MYTH #3: Government has no business regulating family day care providers; regulation is an invasion of the privacy of their homes.

REALITY: Regulatory agencies should be perceived as a necessary safeguard in the child care system rather than as policing agents. Regulation of family day care providers is necessary as a consumer protection for parents and a personal protection for children. Regulation helps to ensure the basic health and safety of children in family day care. Further, regulation sets forth the public definition of acceptable minimum standards and thereby promotes greater consumer and provider awareness.

MYTH #4: Regulation of family day care is ineffective because few family day care providers come forward to be regulated.

REALITY: Providers can be successfully drawn into a regulatory system when it is well-designed and administered. Some states, like California and Minnesota, have regulated a large proportion of their family day care providers. An effective regulatory system has the following characteristics:

- **Standards which provide basic protection for all children in family day care;**
- **Standards which are well-enforced,** with sanctions for non-compliance;
- **Sufficient staff** to process applications quickly, to conduct random inspections of homes on a regular rotating basis, to provide technical assistance for start-up, and to follow up on complaints;
- **Specially trained staff** who are sensitive to the private nature of family day care, and can inspect homes in a non-intrusive manner;
- **Well-publicized regulatory requirements** and mechanisms for registering complaints about violations;
- **Responsiveness to the needs of providers and parents;** regulatory systems promote quality family day care and facilitate provider compliance by informing providers and parents about available community supports - such as the Child Care Food Program, resource and referral agencies, training and technical assistance programs.

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A MARKETING KIT FOR FAMILY DAY CARE PROVIDERS

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The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), established in 1893, is the oldest volunteer Jewish women's organization in America with 100,000 members in 200 Sections throughout the country. NCJW focuses on family issues with a special emphasis on women and children. Through community service, education, advocacy and research, NCJW volunteers traditionally have served as strong and effective supporters of families at the local, state, and national levels.

The NCJW National Family Day Care Project (NFDCP) is a four-year initiative created to promote effective roles for volunteers in improving the quality and supply of family day care. Over the past two years, NCJW volunteers in 30 communities nationwide have conducted local needs assessments and developed resources to support family day care. Currently, the NFDCP is disseminating its publications and providing technical assistance to volunteer and community based organizations on how to develop and maintain family day care projects.

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